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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

Colorado, remarks in Greeley—2573
Florida
Remarks in Fort Myers—2543
Remarks in Jacksonville—2561
Remarks in Lakeland—2549
Remarks in Melbourne—2555
Iowa
Remarks in Council Bluffs—2579
Remarks in Davenport—2585
Remarks in Dubuque—2616
Michigan
Remarks in Pontiac—2641
Remarks in Saginaw—2647
New Hampshire
Remarks in Manchester—2675
Remarks in Portsmouth—2679
New Mexico, remarks in Alamogordo—2567
Ohio
Discussion in Canton—2533
Remarks in Dayton—2654
Remarks in Findlay—2634
Remarks in Vienna—2628
Remarks in Westlake—2660
Pennsylvania
Remarks in Lititz—2622
Remarks in Yardley—2667
Radio address—2542

Addresses and Remarks—Continued

Wisconsin
Discussion in Richland Center—2599
Remarks in Cuba City—2610
Remarks in Onalaska—2591

Bill Signings

Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, statement—2673

Communications to Federal Agencies

Drawdown of Commodities and Services From the Department of Defense To Support African Union Peacekeeping in Darfur, Sudan, memorandum—2542

Proclamations

United Nations Day—2572

Statements by the President

See also Bill Signings
Death of James Cardinal Hickey—2572

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—2687
Checklist of White House press releases—2687
Digest of other White House announcements—2685
Nominations submitted to the Senate—2687

Editor's Note: The President was in Toledo, OH, on October 29, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 29, 2004

Remarks in a Discussion in Canton, Ohio

October 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Go ahead and be seated, please. We've got some work to do. Thank you all for coming today.

First of all, George, thank you for that strong endorsement. I am proud to have George in my corner, just like I'm proud to have thousands of Democrats all across the State of Ohio who understand if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America to put me and Dick Cheney back in office. Thank you, sir.

I'm keeping mighty good company today. So I don't know if you know this or not, but Laura and I were in the seventh grade together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And then we became reacquainted when she was a public school librarian in Texas. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, I will marry you, but make me one promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Never make me give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. Laura is a great speaker, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, warm, wonderful First Lady.

So I have been telling the girls, one of these days, we'll take the family camping trip. [*Laughter*] They envisioned the Grand Canyon, the wilds of Alaska. Girls, this is it, the 2004 campaign. [*Laughter*] We love them dearly. I'm proud of Barbara and Jenna. Thank you all for campaigning so hard.

Thanks for coming today. I'm back in the great city of Canton because I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here to describe to you what I intend to do over the next 4 years to make this country a better place. I believe you have to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote. We've got a very unusual way of making some points today. As you can see, I've been joined by some citizens from Ohio here on the stage. We will listen to their stories. I think it'll help the people of Ohio understand why I have made some of the decisions I have made.

Before I begin, though, I want to thank your Governor, Bob Taft, for joining us today. Governor, great to see you. I want to thank Jennette Bradley, the Lieutenant Governor. Thanks for coming, Governor. You look great.

Congressman Ralph Regula—appreciate you being here, Congressman. Laura and I were looking forward to seeing the wife, but, no, of course, she's probably out mowing the lawn like you should be doing. [*Laughter*]

Listen, you've got a great United States Senator in George Voinovich. He doesn't need a poll or a focus group to tell him what to think. He stands on principle. You know where he's coming from. He doesn't shift in the wind like some other United States Senators I know. [*Laughter*] Put him back in office. And I'm proud of Mike DeWine, a fine United States Senator as well. We're—Laura and I are proud to call both George and Mike friends.

Today, when I landed at the airport, I met Dan Yeric, who's sitting right there. Dan, why don't you wave your hand. Thanks for coming. Dan has been a volunteer at the Akron Children's Hospital for 12 years. The reason I bring him up is the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. The true strength of America is not our military might; it's not the size of our pocketbook. The true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of citizens who are working to change this country one person at a time, those who've heard the call to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. Dan is a soldier in the army of compassion. Thank you for your example. Thank you for your care.

We're getting close to voting time. Who's counting the days? [*Laughter*] And I'm here

to ask for your help. I believe with your help, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory in November.

So Laura and I and the girls are here to thank you for what you are going to do over the next less than 2 weeks: call the phone—get on the phone and call the voters; put up the signs; find those discerning Democrats like the mayor, independents, Republicans; get people to do their duty and vote.

And when you do, as you get them out to vote, remind them what this economy has been through. I know there's tough times here in Ohio. Remind everybody what we have been through. You might remind them, starting with this point: The stock market was in a serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. And then we had a recession. In other words, that stock market decline was an indicator that the economy was heading south, and it did. And then we had some corporate scandals. We passed tough law to make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked. And those attacks cost us nearly a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th, 2001.

Our economy has been through a lot. But we acted. We cut the taxes to spur consumption and investment, and our economy is growing. We raised the child credit to help people with kids. We lowered the marriage penalty. Listen, we don't want a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. We want a Tax Code that encourages marriage. We reduced rates on everybody who pays taxes. I don't think you ought to be trying to pick and choose winners when it comes to tax relief. If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. We helped our small businesses. We encouraged investment.

Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. This month of September—in the last month, that being September, the State of Ohio added 5,500 new jobs. Your unemployment rate will drop from 6.3 to 6 percent. We're moving forward.

I signed a bill that's going to help our manufacturers. It will save $77 billion over the next 10 years for the manufacturing sector of America. That will help keep jobs here. It's a bill that extended the $100,000 expensing deduction, expensing allowance for small businesses. That will help keep jobs here in Ohio. It closes corporate loopholes. It repeals the 4.3 percent tax on railroad diesel and barge fuel. That will help keep jobs here in Ohio.

To keep jobs here, we've got to have less regulations on our job creators. To keep jobs growing in Ohio, we need to do something about the junk lawsuits that plague the job creators in the State of Ohio.

It's important for us to open up markets for U.S. products, for markets, for crops grown right here in the State of Ohio. Listen, we've opened up our market, and it's good for consumers. Here's the way the market works. If you have more products to choose from, you're like to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So rather than hurting our consumers, what I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you; you open up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To keep jobs here, we need an energy plan. I proposed one to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewables. It's a plan that recognizes we can use technology to protect our environment and, at the same time, burn coal and find natural gas. It is a plan that recognizes in order to keep jobs in Ohio, in order to expand the job base here in this State and other States, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to do a good job of educating our people. I told the people when I ran I was going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, you know, the system that just shuffled kids through the schools, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act. It raises standards. It spends more money. But in return for more money, we're now measuring. You cannot solve a problem unless you've diagnosed the problem. We're diagnosing problems early now, and more and more of our children are

learning to read and write and add and subtract, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity in our classrooms.

Education is more than just elementary school. We'll extend high standards to our high schools. We'll emphasize math and science. We'll continue to expand Pell grants so low- and middle-income Americans can start their career with a college diploma. We're going to continue to expand access to community colleges so that people actually have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'm going to also remind you that to make sure our economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign. They are a significant issue, and I'll tell you why. My opponent has proposed $2.2 trillion of new spending thus far. That's trillion with a "T." [*Laughter*] That's a heck of a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he pulled out that same old line, that class warfare line, "Don't worry, we'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You can't raise enough money to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending by taxing the rich. He says he's going to raise the top two brackets. I'll tell you three things about that.

One, most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships, which mean they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And when you're running up the top two brackets, you're taxing about 900,000 to a million small businesses all across America. Guess what, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. It makes no sense to tax job creators.

Secondly, there is a tax gap. There is a difference between what he has promised, 2.2 trillion, and what he can raise. Now, guess who usually gets to fill that gap? Yes, you do.

Thirdly, the so-called rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason when it comes to tax time: to slip the bill and pass it onto you. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you. Taxes would be bad for our economy. If you want to make sure you keep jobs here in Ohio, you keep the taxes low. We're not going to let him tax the American people because we're going to win in November. He can run. He can run—he can even run in camo—[*laughter*]—but he cannot hide.

A couple of other things I want to share with you, and then we're going to talk about health care, as you can see. I want to talk about promoting an ownership society in America. You know, it's said that no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] There's some wisdom in that. [*Laughter*] When you own something, you care about it. If you own your own small business, you care about the future of America. Do you realize that the homeownership rate under my administration is at an alltime high in America. We're going to talk about health savings accounts in a minute, but this is a way for people to own their own health care and manage their own health care in a way that makes sense for American families and American small businesses.

I want to talk about Social Security and ownership. The 2000 campaign, I remember it clearly. During that campaign, people ran advertisements that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their Social Security checks." You might remember those ads. It's kind of the old typical political scare tactic. Well, as you're out gathering up the vote, remind our senior citizens, I did get elected, and you got your checks. And I'm going to get elected again, and you're still going to get your checks.

The reason I bring that up is because I'm willing to talk about how to make sure the Social Security system is available for our children and our grandchildren. It is necessary to do so. See, we're in good shape as a baby boomer. The money in the trust—there's enough people paying in that we'll be taken care of. We need to worry about the children and grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be available for them.

In order to make sure Social Security is available for our young, I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account that will earn a greater rate of interest—rate of return on their money than it does in the current Social Security trust, a personal account they can call their own, a personal account they can pass on to

whomever they want, and a personal account the Government will never take away.

And here we have another difference in this campaign. See, I believe a President ought to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And we have a problem in Social Security. You might remember one of our debates when my opponent said, "Well, the status quo was fine." Let me remind you of two things about that. One, he is the only person on that stage during the debate that voted to tax Social Security benefits, not once but eight times. And secondly, the status quo is not fine when it comes to our children. A President must be willing to confront problems. And in a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to make sure Social Security is available for the younger generation.

Now, let me talk about health care. We have a clear choice when it comes to health care in this campaign. I have a commonsense approach to make sure health care is available and affordable. Available through places like community health centers, where the poor and the indigent can get health care and relieve pressure off of the emergency rooms of the hospitals all across the country. Available by making sure our children of low-income families are fully subscribed in the Government health care program for them.

Affordable by recognizing that most of the uninsured in America work for small businesses, and therefore, small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. Affordable through health savings accounts, which we'll discuss. Health care more affordable by moving generic drugs quicker to the market so our seniors are able to better afford prescription drugs.

Affordable because I'm the first President to have taken on Medicare—I shouldn't say that; other Presidents have talked about Medicare. It used to be called "Mediscare" because anytime you talked about it, somebody would club you over the head with it as an issue, political issue. But I went to Washington to solve problems. And we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing. Medicine was modernizing; Medicare wasn't. We'd pay tens of thousands of dollars for a heart surgery for a Medicare patient but not a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. So I brought Republicans and Democrats together. I signed a good Medicare bill that says, in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we have got to do something about these frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. We're going to talk about that issue in a minute.

We're going to talk about that issue in a minute, but I do want to make it very clear there is a difference of opinion between me and my opponent on health care. In one of the debates he said—he looked right in the camera, he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it," referring to his health care program. Stared right in the camera and said it. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people that will be signed up for health insurance on his program will end up on a Government program. When you raise the limits of Medicaid, it provides an incentive for small-business owners to provide no insurance for their employees because the Government will pick it up. And therefore, millions of people will go from private insurance to the Government rolls. His is a plan that creates 225 new mandates for small businesses. Government-run health care does not work. We have got a great health care system in the world because it's innovative, because it's—private medicine is at the center of our health care system. And my opponent's plan would increase the scope and the size of the Federal Government when it comes to your health care decisions.

In all we do to make sure health care works, we'll make sure the decisions are between patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

Up here with me is Michael Gordon. No, not Michael Gordon. He didn't make it. Michael Gordon was supposed to be here. He's a small-business owner. Let me talk about Michael Gordon right quick. He's stuck out

there, probably behind a barricade chanting, "Four more years." [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Oh, Michael, you made it. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, he's from Tendon Manufacturing. He's a small business. He's adding employees. He's optimistic—a small manufacturing company here in Ohio. He is a Subchapter S corporation. I wish Michael were sitting up here so you could see him. He's a Subchapter S. He's expanding his business. When you run up the top two brackets of the Tax Code, you're taxing Michael. You're taxing his company. It makes no sense to tax the small-business job creators, which is precisely what Senator Kerry will do.

Now, let me talk to you about Bruce, Bruce McDonnell. That's you.

Bruce McDonnell. That's me.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] What do you do, Bruce?

Mr. McDonnell. I'm a CPA.

The President. You are? Good. And he is here to discuss with us health savings accounts. Some of you have heard of health savings accounts; some of you haven't heard of health savings accounts. But it is an innovative way to make sure the health care costs are reasonable.

Describe to us, if you don't mind, for this great crowd how it works.

[*Mr. McDonnell made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me stop you. That's to pay for major medical bills. So anything above 1,000 for an individual will be taken care of by the insurance company. Go ahead.

[*Mr. McDonnell made further remarks.*]

The President. Right. So here's the way it works. He says—what he just said is, a health savings account, one, is a combination of a tax-free saving account plus a high deductible insurance policy. So say you've got a $1,000 deductible, from zero to 1,000, you're responsible for paying, or in his case, his company contributes from the zero to 1,000 a portion of that. And then above 1,000, the insurance company pays for it.

But think about the benefits of that kind of plan. First of all, if you don't use all 1,000, it's rolled over to the next year tax-free, so that you begin to accumulate savings for your own health care. Secondly, if he were to start a new firm, which I'm not suggesting you're going to do, but if you were, and you moved, the health care account would go with you. It's yours. You own the health care account. You make the decisions. Decisionmaking between patient and doctor is a part of how we introduce market forces into a health care industry. One way to control cost is to let consumers have more decisionmaking, which is precisely what a health savings account does.

Isn't that right?

Mr. McDonnell. Absolutely right.

The President. Did we get it right?

Mr. McDonnell. You got it right.

The President. This is a very interesting way to help small businesses hold down—[*applause*].

Guess who else is a health savings account owner? Doc, you're a health savings account owner—Dr. Schwieterman. Where are you from, doc?

Dr. Tom Schwieterman. I'm from Mercer County, which is on the other side of the State, Mr. President.

The President. Welcome. Glad you're here. You are a doctor of?

Dr. Schwieterman. Family practice, and I provided obstetrics up until a month ago.

The President. Yes. We've got a problem. "Provided up until a month ago"—helps define what we're here to talk about, which is good health care for people.

Doc, tell me, you have been—you've told me something really interesting. I don't know if you know this, but my grandfather was raised in Columbus, Ohio. He ended up being a Senator from Connecticut—Connecticut, yes. My dad, as you know, was in politics. I'm in politics. Anybody in your family ever been a doctor before?

Dr. Schwieterman. I am the fourth generation family physician in the same town and actually in the same building in rural Mercer County.

The President. Yes. Nothing wrong with following the old family footsteps. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Schwieterman. Little easier, though.

The President. Right, girls. [*Laughter*] Oops.

So, we were backstage talking. I mean, this is, obviously, not the first time I met Tom, or the doc, I call him. We have a—he's a rural doc. Rural health care is really important for the quality of life in a State like Ohio. And so tell me, describe your problem.

Dr. Schwieterman. We have a family practice that has a very long heritage, of course, 113 years of providing general medical care and obstetrics. Over those 113 years, we have delivered over or near 10,000 children, and—[*applause*]. Thank you. See, my dad's right there. He delivered 5,000.

The President. Is that Dad?

Dr. Schwieterman. That's my dad.

The President. Hey, Dad. You raised a good boy.

Dr. Schwieterman. And during those 110–13 years, we have never had a claims made against our practice. We have retained a majority of those births within the practice. And unfortunately, last month, we were forced to do our last delivery, and this was a fourth generation patient. And she unfortunately ended the legacy that we have enjoyed for so long.

The President. And why? Tell people why. They need to know the truth. The people of Ohio need to understand what's taking place as a result of all these lawsuits.

Dr. Schwieterman. For the past 3 years, we've pretty much done ob at cost. What we took in is what we paid out in malpractice, and this year, we—our premiums went up 40 percent, and it became a point where we could not afford to maintain a small business with our employees, take care of our patients, with the premiums going from 25 to 80 thousand dollars in 48 months.

The President. Yes. Let me tell—people need to hear this. This is an issue in this campaign. The quality of life in the State of Ohio depends on whether or not you've got good docs and good, strong hospitals and people being able to find health care in cities and in rural America.

Let me talk to you about these lawsuits. First of all, docs practice what's called defensive medicine. If you've got a lawyer looming right behind you all the time, if you're worried about what happens in the court—in the—okay, fine. Everybody needs a good lawyer. I've got too many myself. Anyway —[*laughter*]—it's the difference between some lawyers and personal injury trial lawyers that are constantly out there trying to convert this legal system into what looks like a lottery. And guess who ends up paying for the ticket? The taxpayers and the people, because the quality of health care is going down.

If you've got a lawsuit, if you think you're going to get sued, you're going to practice more medicine than is needed so you can defend yourself in a court of law. That's what happens, and guess what that does to the Federal budget, for example. The defensive practice of medicine costs our budget about $28 billion a year. I say "our" budget, because when I talk about the Government budget, you pay for it. It's your money, 28 billion a year in excess costs in Medicaid and Medicare and veterans' health benefits. This is a national issue.

Secondly, because of the lawsuits, because many people just settle whether the suit has merit or not, premiums go up. And guess who pays the premiums? You do.

And thirdly, as a result of a lot of these lawsuits, people just can't simply practice medicine anymore. And you just talk—you just heard the story that unfortunately is being repeated over and over and over again in America. This country needs medical liability reform—now.

And this is an issue in this campaign. This is an issue in campaign—this campaign. Oh, I heard him in the debates, my opponent. I heard him talking about medical liability reform. But let me tell you something. We had a bill on the floor of the United States Senate to provide liability protection to ob-gyns, and my opponent voted "no." He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times in the United States Senate. He can run, but he cannot hide from that record.

Barb Coen is with us. Doc, thanks. Where do you work?

Dr. Barb Coen. I work in Norton, Ohio, at a practice called Generations Women's Health Care, with my partner, Dr. Susan Clark, who's here.

The President. Where's the doc? Oh, there you go. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you. Very good. Dr. Clark?

Dr. Coen. Dr. Clark.

The President. Yes, Dr. Clark. Good to see you, doc. You must have drawn the short straw, so you're the one who had to actually get up here and talk in front of all the cameras. [*Laughter*] Tell us about your practice. Just give—tell people exactly what's happening.

[*Dr. Coen made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Dr. Coen. And as all of you know who've had a baby, the relationship between an ob-gyn and a pregnant patient is pretty special. They trust you with not only their life but the life of their unborn child. I can't tell you what an honor it is to be the first person to touch a new life when it comes into the world. There is absolutely nothing like it.

The President. Listen, it was pretty cool to be the second person when I touched Barbara and Jenna. [*Laughter*] Go ahead. They'll be happy to hear I let the doc go first. [*Laughter*]

[*Dr. Coen made further remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, doc. I appreciate you. Thank you. [*Applause*] Okay, thanks, hold on. We've got more work to do here. Thank you. Stay right there. Thank you all. And not only do we need legislation, we need something that works. Legislation that doesn't work is not a good deal. We're not going to do that. We need to make sure that there is a real cap on noneconomic damages. If you want docs to be in practice, we need to make sure that the reform of the medical liability law works. That's why I believe in firm caps to keep docs in business.

Andy Kazar is with us. Andy, tell us your story. This is—just, again, I want people listening to understand the consequences of not getting a good medical liability law out of the United States Senate, a law that my opponent has consistently opposed. Please.

[*Andy Kazar made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, this is—the story is being repeated all across the country. I was in Pennsylvania yesterday—ob-gyns can't practice. Women have to drive miles in order to find a doc. This is not the quality of life that we expect here in America. And it's caused by frivolous lawsuits. Make no mistake about it, it is a legal culture.

When you're out rounding up the vote or if you're listening and trying to determine who you're for, remember the stories up here, remember the stories of goodhearted docs who are worried about practicing their skill. And remember the story about moms who are deeply concerned about their child. This is a big issue in this campaign.

Now, I want to talk about a couple of other issues, and then we'll all go home and start working. Actually, I'm going down to Florida; you're going to go home and start working. [*Laughter*] The—and I'm not going down there to sit on the beach, either. [*Laughter*] I'm going down there to campaign.

Two other—a couple of other things. I talk about time of change, and these are changing times. Some things don't change. The values we try to live by don't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. And we stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for institutions like family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for judges—Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Talking about education and health care, these are very important issues. But let me say to you that it all goes to naught if we don't secure this country, that the security of the American people is the most important responsibility of the President. If we show any uncertainty or weakness in this decade, this world of ours will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen so long as I'm your President.

Let me talk to you—I want to talk to you about some of the lessons that I've learned as your President after September the 11th. First of all, we face an enemy which has no conscience. They are coldblooded. Therefore, you can never hope for the best with them. You cannot negotiate with them. You can't say, "Oh, well, maybe we'll sign a peace treaty, and therefore, they'll change their ways." The only way to secure America, to keep us safe, is to find them and bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And therefore, any strategy has got to be one that

is consistent, firm, and resolved and never relenting. [*Applause*]

Hold on a second. Hold on for a—I've got some more I've got to tell you.

Secondly, this is a different kind of war. You've got to understand, I wish I wasn't talking about war. No President ever wants to be the President of a country—of our country during war. War is horrible. But it's necessary to be realistic during these times. Our most solemn duty is to protect you, and it's a different kind of war than we're used to. It's a kind of war when you say something, you need to speak clearly and mean what you say.

And so when I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant what I said. I was speaking to the Taliban in Afghanistan. And see, I was talking to the Taliban because they were providing safe haven for Al Qaida. Al Qaida was training there. And we said, "Listen, get rid of Al Qaida." They didn't believe the United States of America. But because of a great military and because I meant what I said, Al Qaida and—the Taliban is no longer in control of Afghanistan and Al Qaida is on the run.

We're making progress. Three-quarters of Al Qaida and their associates have been brought to justice. I assure you, we're after the rest of them. And the Taliban no longer is in power. And as a result of our action, America and the world are safer.

But I want to tell your sons and daughters about what has taken place in an incredibly brief period of time. It wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan that young girls were not allowed to go to school. Think about a society that was run by such barbarians that girls were not allowed to be educated. These ideologues of hate had a dark vision about the future. As a matter of fact, if their moms didn't toe the line, they'd be whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. In defending ourselves and upholding doctrine, we liberated the people of Afghanistan. Twenty-five million people now live in freedom. Millions went to the polls to vote for their President, and the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Three-and-a-half years ago, if you would have asked anybody whether or not women would be voting in Afghanistan for President, they would have said, "You're crazy. You're wrong." And freedom is on the march. Darkness has turned to light in Afghanistan, and America is better off for it. We're better off to have an example of freedom in that part of the world. We're better off to have an ally in Afghanistan, an ally in the war on terror. And we're making progress in Iraq.

The third lesson of September the 11th, by the way, is we've got to take threats seriously before they fully materialize. You can't hope—you cannot hope for the best. It used to be, prior to September the 11th, that if we saw a threat, we could deal with it or not deal with it because we didn't ever think it would come home to hurt us. That's what we thought. That all changed on September the 11th. You better have a President who fully understands that.

My opponent in his convention speech said, "Oh, we'll respond if attacked." That is a pre-September the 11th mindset that is dangerous in the world in which we live. We've got to take threats seriously before they come to hurt us.

And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. The world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

There will be Presidential elections there in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers.

You know, I told the story one time about the seven—there's a lot of docs here and healers here. One of the most poignant stories of my Presidency was when the Oval Office door opened and in came seven men from Iraq, all of whom had had their right hand cut off by Saddam Hussein because the currency of that country had devalued and he needed scapegoats. It's a true story, I'm telling you. And I asked one of the men there, I said, "Why you?" He said he was a small merchant who needed gold to make jewelry, and he sold dinars to buy another currency so he could buy the gold, and it just happened to be on the day that Saddam was looking for a scapegoat. He found seven small merchants, seven individuals, hauled in, Xs carved in their foreheads, and their right hands cut off.

They had come to see me in the Oval Office because, guess what happened? Great compassion existed for them when their stories were known. They had been to Houston, Texas, to get new hands put on. And the guy who did it is a guy I know, and he said, "Would you mind welcoming these citizens of the world into the Oval Office," which I was more than happy to do. They came in; they were in awe of the Oval Office, of course. You know, I'm kind of a weeper at times; and they were weeping; I was semi-weeping. The guy grabs a Sharpie with his new hand and folds it and writes a prayer in Arabic blessing the United States of America. I told the guy, I told him, I said, "Freedom is on the march in your country. There will be institutions greater than the people there. One of the great things about the American Presidency is the office is always greater than the person. And someday in your country, the institutions will be bigger than the individuals, so that no leader will ever be able to pluck you out of society and cut off your right hand again."

People want to be free in this world. There will be elections in Iraq. Listen, these enemies are trying to stop us. This guy Zarqawi, he's trying to stop the march of freedom. Freedom frightens these ideologues of hate. It is the worst thing that can happen to them. They can't stand the thought of free societies.

I love to tell the story about our friend Koizumi. I'm getting kind of wound up here, yes. [*Laughter*] She wants me to—all right, hold on a second. I kind of felt the invisible hook, you know. [*Laughter*]

I want to share this with you, though, because it's important for you to know my thinking about how to make this world a better place. I have a deep desire for your children to grow up in a peaceful world. I understand my duty to protect this country. I believe that liberty can transform societies. I believe that, and living proof of that is the fact that Prime Minister Koizumi is a good friend of Laura and mine. That probably doesn't seem much to some, but remember, it wasn't all that long ago, 60 years ago, that we were at war with the Japanese. The Japanese were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm confident many of your relatives fought against the Japanese.

And after we won the war in World War II, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, and others in our country believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. There was a lot of skeptics then. You can understand why. "An enemy couldn't conceivably become a democracy," some would say. "Why do we even care about working with a country that had inflicted * so much harm on the citizens of this country?" But there was great faith in this view. And as a result of that and as a result of helping Japan become a democracy, I sit down at the table with the Prime Minister of a former enemy, talking about how to keep the peace in a troubled world, talking about doing what we all want, and that is to extend the peace.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with the duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it. [*Applause*]

Hold on for a second. I have a—I believe that people want to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

In the closing days of this campaign, it's very important for you to remind your friends and neighbors we have—my opponent and I have a different vision about how to keep America secure. He talks in terms of a "global test" before we commit troops. I didn't make that up. The man was standing right there when he said it—well, right here to my right during the debate. He wasn't there physically right now. I saw a lot of heads turn. [*Laughter*]

Listen, I work with our friends and allies. We'll continue to build alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank you all for coming to greet us. I want to thank you for your help. I know where I want to lead this country. I know what it takes to continue to expand this economy so people can find work. I've got a vision for a health care plan that empowers patients

* White House correction.

and docs. I believe in high standards in our schools, and we'll continue to press for educational excellence for every child. And I understand that the President of the United States must be consistent and firm and resolved in these troubling times.

You know, when I campaigned across your State, I said if you gave me—in 2000—if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. And thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. at the Canton Palace Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor George M. McKelvey of Youngstown, OH, who introduced the President; Gov. Bob Taft and Lt. Gov. Jennette B. Bradley of Ohio; Mary Regula, wife of Congressman Ralph Regula; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on Drawdown of Commodities and Services From the Department of Defense To Support African Union Peacekeeping in Darfur, Sudan

October 22, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2005–06

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Drawdown of Commodities and Services from the Department of Defense to Support African Union Peacekeeping in Darfur, Sudan

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 552(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), I hereby determine that:

(1) as a result of an unforeseen emergency, the provision of assistance under Chapter 6 of Part II of the Act in amounts in excess of funds otherwise available for such assistance is important to the national interests of the United States; and

(2) such unforeseen emergency requires the immediate provision of assistance under Chapter 6 of Part II of the Act.

I therefore direct the drawdown of up to $2,500,000 in commodities and services from the Department of Defense to support the transportation of African Union forces to Darfur, Sudan.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 23, 2004

Good morning. In the 3 years since September the 11th attacks, our Government has acted decisively to protect the homeland.

This week, I took another important step by signing the 2005 Homeland Security Appropriations Act. This bill provides essential resources for Coast Guard patrols and port security, for the Federal Air Marshal program, and for technology that will defend aircraft against missiles. With this law, we are adding new resources to patrol our borders and to verify the identity of foreign visitors to America. The new law also includes vital money for first-responders and for better security of chemical facilities and nuclear plants and water treatment plants and bridges and subways and tunnels.

All these measures show the unwavering commitment of our Government. And since 2001, we have tripled overall spending for homeland security. We are doing everything in our power to protect the American people. There is more to do, and we are moving forward.

To protect America, our country needs the best possible intelligence. Chairman Tom Kean and other members of the 9/11 Commission made thoughtful and valuable recommendations on intelligence reform. My

administration is already implementing the vast majority of those recommendations that can be enacted without a vote of Congress. We are expanding and strengthening the capabilities of the CIA. We are transforming the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism. We have established the Terrorist Threat Integration Center so we can bring together all the available intelligence on terrorist threats in one place.

But other changes require new laws. Congress needs to create the position of the National Intelligence Director, with strong authority over the personnel and budgets of our intelligence agencies. These and other reforms are necessary to make our intelligence community more effective and to stay ahead of the threats. My administration has sent proposed legislation to Capitol Hill, and we are working with Congress to pass a good bill. I urge Congress to act quickly, so I can sign these needed reforms into law.

The surest way to defend our country is to stay on the offensive against terrorists. In an era of weapons of mass destruction, waiting for threats to arrive at our doorsteps is to invite disaster. Tyrants and terrorists will not give us polite notice before they attack our country. As long as I am the Commander in Chief, I will confront dangers abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

My opponent has a fundamental misunderstanding of the war on terror. Senator Kerry was recently asked how September the 11th had changed him. He replied, quote, "It didn't change me much at all," end quote. And his unchanged world view becomes obvious when he calls the war on terror primarily an intelligence and law enforcement operation. That is very dangerous thinking.

We must fight the war on terror with every asset of our national power. We are waging a global campaign from the mountains of Central Asia to the deserts of the Middle East and from the Horn of Africa to the Philippines. These efforts are paying off. Since September the 11th, 2001, more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been killed, captured, or detained. The rest of them know we will hunt them down.

America faces a grave threat, and our Government is doing everything in its power to confront and defeat that threat. We're making progress in protecting our homeland and progress against the terrorists who seek to harm our Nation. And by staying focused and determined, we will prevail.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:46 a.m. on October 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Thomas H. Kean, Chairman, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Fort Myers, Florida

October 23, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. It's getting close to voting time, and I am here to ask for your help. Get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. Remind people we have a duty to vote. And when you get them headed to the polls—and by the way, don't overlook discerning Democrats—[*laughter*]—people like Senator Zell Miller. When you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I want to thank you all for coming. It's a great way to start a Saturday morning, at the ballpark with a lot of great Americans. I'm so happy that Laura is traveling with me today. Today I'm going to talk about why I think you need to put me back in office for 4 more years, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

My runningmate, Dick Cheney, is out working hard. Listen, I readily concede, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his judgment and

his experience, and he's getting the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of my brother Jeb. When the hurricanes hit this part of your State, I came by to try to lend my support, to remind people that the Federal Government will do everything we can do to help the people of this part of the world get their feet back on the ground. But your Governor showed great compassion and great leadership.

I want to thank Connie Mack for joining us today. He represented this State and this district with such class and dignity. I'm proud that his son, Connie Mack IV, is running for the United States Congress. Nothing—there's nothing wrong with a son following in a father's footsteps. When you're in there voting for Connie, make sure you put Mel Martinez in the United States Senate.

I want to thank my friend Congressman Mark Foley for joining us today. I appreciate the mayor of Fort Myers, being here. Mayor Humphrey, thanks for coming. I want to thank the Attorney General for joining us. I want to thank the House Speaker. Listen, I want to thank all the people who are serving for coming here today.

I thank my friend Daron Norwood for singing to help entertain you before the—before we made it here.

Most of all, I want to thank you. I want to thank the people putting up the signs, making the phone calls, doing all the hard work at the grassroots level. With your help, we'll carry Florida again and win a great victory.

We've just got 10 days to go in this campaign. And voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with different approaches and different records. You know where I stand, and sometimes—and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I am proudly running on mine. The Senator is running from his—[*laughter*]—and there's a reason why. There's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. [*Laughter*] I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so.

This election comes down to five clear choices for American families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and to our future.

The first clear choice is very important because it concerns the security of our country and the security of your family. All our progresses on every issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the poll in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any we have faced before. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous and determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for our homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. To meet the changing threats in today's world, we are transforming our All-Volunteer Army—I will keep it an all-volunteer army. We're on the offensive. We will stay on the offensive. And we're succeeding. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

My opponent has a very different approach. He says that September the 11th—he says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all," end quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His top foreign policy adviser questioned it is even a war at all, saying, "It's just like a metaphor, like the war on poverty."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Anyone who thinks we are fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face. You cannot win a war if you are not convinced we're even in one. Senator Kerry also misunderstands our battle against the insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. After voting to authorize force against Saddam Hussein, after calling it the right decision, when I sent troops into Iraq, the Senator now calls it the " wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator used to recognize that Saddam Hussein was a gathering threat who hated America. After all, he said so. He used to recognize that Saddam was a state sponsor of terror with a history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. After all, he said so. He used to understand that Saddam was a major source of instability in the Middle East. After all, he said so. And when he voted to authorize force, the Senator must have recognized the nightmare scenario that terrorists might somehow access weapons of mass destruction. Senator Kerry seems to have forgotten all of that, as his position has evolved during the course of the campaign. You might call it election amnesia. I know then and I know now that America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Senator Kerry now calls Iraq a "diversion."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But the case of just one terrorist shows how wrong his thinking is. It's a man named Zarqawi. He's responsible for planting car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. I want you to remember, he ran a terrorist camp, a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan until our forces arrived to destroy that camp. He then fled to Iraq. He recently publicly announced his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. If Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting American forces in Iraq, what does Senator Kerry think, that he'd be a small businessman? [*Laughter*] That he'd be living a peaceful life, making positive contributions to society somewhere? I don't think so. Our troops will defeat them there so we do not have to face them in our own cities.

The choice in this election cannot be clearer. You cannot lead our Nation to the decisive victory on which the security of every American family depends if you do not see the true dangers of the post-September 11th world. My opponent has a September the 10th point of view. At his convention, he declared that his strategy will be to respond to attacks after America is hit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That would be too late. In our debates, he said with a straight face, we can defend America only if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. I heard him. He was standing right there when he said it. I will work with our friends and allies, but I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank the veterans who are here. I want to thank the military families who are here. I want to thank those who wear the uniform who are here. You will have the full support of our Government. That's why I went to Congress and proposed $87 billion of funding. I want—as you gather up the vote, I want you to remind your fellow citizens of this startling statistic. Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in combat—only four Members—two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My opponent is a person who said he actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before he voted against it. He then said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I want you to recognize what's happened in Afghanistan. That country has gone from darkness to light. Young girls couldn't go to school some 3½ years ago. Their mothers were whipped in the public square if they didn't toe the line of these barbaric Taliban. Today, because we defended ourselves, freedom is on the march. Millions voted in a Presidential election. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman. And the world is better off for it.

Despite ongoing violence, Iraq has an interim government. It's building up its own

security forces. We're headed toward elections in January. You see, we're safer, America is safer with Afghanistan and Iraq on the road to democracy. We can be proud that 50 million citizens of those countries now live as free men and women. We must understand that free societies help us keep the peace. I believe strongly in freedom. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for America's families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child. We reduced the marriage penalty. Our Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent to help our families. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes. As a result of these good policies, real after-tax income, the money in your pocket, the money you get to use, is up about 10 percent since I took office.

Our economy has been through a lot. See, that stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my inauguration. That stock market decline foretold a recession. And then we had some corporate scandals. By the way, we made it clear, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country. And then we got attacked, and those attacks hurt our economy. We lost about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies have led us back to growth, and that's good for American families. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 4.5 percent. We're moving forward.

My opponent has different plans for your budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I asked Congress to help grow this economy and help our American families, he voted against the higher child credit; he voted against marriage penalty relief; he voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, the average middle-class family would be paying 2,000 more a year to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's kind of part of a pattern. He voted 10 times to raise taxes on gasoline as a United States Senator. And all told, during his 20 years in the Senate, he voted 98 times to raise taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Think about it. It's about five times a year he's voted to raise taxes. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] And that's a warning. That's a predictable pattern. During the campaign, he's made a lot of big, expensive promises. He's promised about $2.2 trillion worth of new spending. That's with a "T." [*Laughter*] That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Oh, I'm just going to tax the rich." We have heard that before. First of all, when you raise the top two brackets, you know who you're taxing; you're taxing job creators. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Raising taxes on small businesses is lousy economic policy.

When you talk about running up the top two brackets or taxing the rich, you raise about 600 billion or 800 billion dollars, depending on who's counting, but remember, that's far short of the 2.2 trillion he promised. So there's a gap, a gap between what he's promised and how he's going to raise the money. And guess who usually gets to fill the gap?

Audience member. We do!

The President. That's exactly right. And finally, the rich hire lawyers and accountants during tax time for a reason; that's to slip the tab and stick you with the bill. We're not going to let him raise your taxes; we're going to carry Florida and win a great victory in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for

our Nation's families. I believe a good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, meaningful education reforms to bring high standards to our classrooms and to make schools more accountable to our parents. We're making progress. Math and reading scores are rising. We're closing an achievement gap by helping all students. We will build on these reforms. We will extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We will continue to improve life for our families by making health care more available and more affordable. We'll expand health savings accounts so more small businesses can cover their workers and more families will be able to get health care accounts they can manage and call their own. We will create association health plans so small businesses can join together to buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get.

We will help families in need by expanding community health centers and making sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health programs. We'll help patients and doctors everywhere by doing something about the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of your practice and run good doctors out of business. We want our doctors focusing on fighting illnesses, not on fighting frivolous lawsuits. These lawsuits are a national problem that require a national solution. I am for medical liability reform.

Senator Kerry has a different point of view on our schools and health care system. Listen, he voted for the No Child Left Behind Act but now wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposed including measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students can read or write or add and subtract.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against health savings accounts. He opposes association health plans. He has voted 10 times against medical liability reform.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You heard him in the debates the other day, mouth something about helping our docs and patients. Remember, he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now he's proposing a big Government health care plan that would cause 8 million families to lose private coverage they get at work and have to go onto a Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage under his idea would be enrolled in a Government program. In one of our debates, he tried to tell America that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

My opponent's plan would move America down the road to Federal control of health care, and that is the wrong road for American families. In all we do to improve health care in a new term, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Medicare and Social Security. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment. I promised to improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage for our seniors. I kept my word. You remember those endless debates; leaders on both political parties have talked about strengthening Medicare for years. We got the job done. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine through drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 to help them this year and next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage, even though it was supported by AARP and other senior groups. Later he said, quote, "If I'm the President, we're going to repeal that phony bill." Then a little later, he said, "No, I don't want to repeal it." Sounds familiar.

As your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we have worked so hard to pass and keep the promise to America's seniors. And we will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And as we

do so, we will strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Every election, desperate politicians try to scare our seniors about Social Security. It's just predictable. You remember in the 2000 campaign, they ran the ads telling our seniors, "If George W. gets elected, you won't get your Social Security check." Well, when you're out gathering up the vote, remind our seniors that George W. did get elected and our seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we all must be concerned about our children and our grandchildren. Someday, our youngest workers will retire, and we've got to make sure the Social Security system will be there when they need it. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and put it into a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return, a personal savings account they can call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

Once again, my opponent takes a different point of view. He talks about protecting Social Security, but he's the only candidate in this race who voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And when it comes to the next generation, he has offered nothing. The job of the President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. In a new term, I will bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Social Security for an upcoming generation of Americans.

The fifth choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping our families strong. And here, my opponent and I are miles apart. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization, and I will defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it. My predecessor, President Clinton, signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats and many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed that we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against parental notification laws——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I will continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent has said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Most American families do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found right here in Fort Myers, Florida.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our families, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. The decision is in the best hands, because the decision belongs to the American people.

I see a bright future for America. I see a better day for all of us. One of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan, Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." If you listen carefully to this campaign, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that is coming.

We've been through a lot together in the last 4 years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we can see the valley below. We'll protect our families.

We'll build their prosperity. We will defend the deepest values. We'll spread freedom in this world, and as we do so, we'll keep America safe and spread the peace.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made this pledge. I said if I was elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. at City of Palms Park. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; former Senator Connie Mack III of Florida; Connie Mack IV, candidate for Congress in Florida's Fourteenth Congressional District; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida; Mayor Jim Humphrey of Fort Myers, FL; State Attorney General Charlie Crist of Florida; Johnnie Byrd, speaker, Florida House of Representatives; country music entertainer Daron Norwood; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist network.

Remarks in Lakeland, Florida

October 23, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming today. Laura and I are so honored that so many came out to say hello. We really appreciate it. It is a beautiful day to be campaigning in the great State of Florida. Of course, according to your Governor, every day is a beautiful day in Florida.

I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. We're close to voting time. As a matter of fact, in your State, voting time is already here. Please go to your friends and neighbors, people from all parties—don't overlook discerning Democrats—[*laughter*]—people like Zell Miller. They want a better country too. Tell them we have a duty in this country to vote. Tell them we have an obligation in a free society to go to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America and a stronger America and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I think it's important to go around this country telling people what you're going to do. I'm here to tell you why I think you need to put me in office for 4 more years. But perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. I'm sure some of you all will appreciate this, when I tell you that Laura and I knew each other in the seventh grade in San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. We became reacquainted. She was a public school librarian at the time. I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine, so long as you make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "I never want to have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she speaks, the American people see a compassionate, warm, strong First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's doing a great job. I see some others out here who are follically challenged. [*Laughter*] See, I admit he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be pleased to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of his experience.

I'm proud to be traveling with my brother. Jeb Bush is a great Governor for Florida. He's led with conviction. You know, one thing about him, you don't have to worry about where he stands. In other words, he's not one of these politicians who is going to take a poll or run a focus group, trying to figure out what to tell you. He stands on principles. That's how we were raised. You stand for what you believe. And Jeb showed great courage and compassion during the times of these storms. I came over to try to lend a hand and show the people of this important State that the Federal Government cared, people around the country cared for you. But I was incredibly impressed by two things, one, Jeb's leadership, and two, the great compassion of the people of Florida.

I'm proud to be up here with Adam Putnam. I call him Red; you call him Congressman. [*Laughter*] We went over and saw some orange growers the other day, and it was my honor to be in that citrus grove, telling the orange growers of this part of the State, we're going to help them get their feet back on the ground.

I want to thank—listen, while you're out there voting, voting for me and Dick Cheney, make sure you vote for Mel Martinez for the United States Senate. He'll be a fine United States Senator, no doubt in my mind.

I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Toni Jennings for being here. I want to thank the State Senate majority whip. I want to thank all the local and State officials who are here.

I want to thank Trini Triggs for performing for you all.

I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls, the people who have encouraged this rally. I want to thank you for what you've done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do. With your help, we will carry Florida and win a great victory in November.

We just got 10 days to go in the campaign. Who's counting? The voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and records. You know where I stand. And sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. We both have records. We both have records.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. We both have records. I'm proudly running on mine. And the Senator is running from his, and there's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and Senator John Kerry sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. At a time when our country has much to accomplish and much more to do, I offer a record of reform and results, and my opponent offers a long list of out-of-the-mainstream votes.

This election comes down to five clear choices for American families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and our future.

The first choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on any of the other issues depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any * we have seen before. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous, and they are determined to strike again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terrorism.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President, the most solemn duty, is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're strengthening the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence services. We are transforming our All-Volunteer Army. We will not have a draft. We are staying on the offensive against these terrorists. We are relentless and we are determined, and our strategy is paying off. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

My opponent has a different approach. He says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all," end quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His top foreign policy adviser questioned it is even a war at all, saying, "It's just like a metaphor, like the war on poverty." Anyone who thinks we're fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face. You cannot win a war if you are not convinced we are even in one.

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* White House correction.

Senator Kerry also misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. After voting to authorize force against Saddam Hussein, after calling it the right decision when I sent troops into Iraq, the Senator now calls it the "wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator used to recognize that Saddam Hussein was a gathering threat who hated America. After all, he said so. He used to recognize that Saddam was a state sponsor of terror with a history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. After all, he said so. He used to understand that Saddam was a major source of instability in the Middle East. After all, he said so. And when he voted to authorize force, the Senator must have recognized the nightmare scenario that terrorists might somehow gain access to weapons of mass destruction. Senator Kerry seems to have forgotten all of that as his position has evolved during the course of this campaign. You might call it election amnesia. [*Laughter*] I know then and I know now that the world and America are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Senator Kerry now calls Iraq a "diversion." But the case of just one terrorist shows how wrong his thinking is. A man named Zarqawi is responsible for the car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. He ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan until coalition troops arrived. He then ran to Iraq, where he's fighting today. He supports and swore allegiance to Usama bin Laden. If Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting American forces and Iraqi forces in Iraq, what does my opponent think he'd be doing, a peaceful businessman somewhere? Leading a benevolence campaign? [*Laughter*] Of course not. Our troops will defeat them there so we do not have to face them in our own cities.

The choice in this election could not be clearer when it comes to the security of our families. You cannot lead our Nation to decisive victory, on which the security of every American family depends, if you do not see the true dangers of a post-September the 11th world. My opponent has a September 10th point of view. You might remember, at his convention he declared that his strategy would be to respond to attacks after America is hit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That would be too late. In our debates, he said we can defend America only if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing right there when he said it. I work with our friends and allies. We will strengthen our coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I saw some of our troops coming in. I want to thank them for their service. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank our military families who are here for supporting our troops fighting for freedom and security. And I want to assure you your loved ones will have the full support of our Government.

That's why I went to Congress and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding. This was money to support our troops in harm's way. When you're out gathering up the vote, I want you to remind your fellow citizens of this startling statistic. There were 4 Members in the United States Senate—only 4 out of 100—that voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way. And four of those—two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him about that vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." You know—I bet you don't hear many people talking like that around the coffee shops here. They pressed him even further, and he finally just threw up his hands. He said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

And to protect America, we will lead the cause of freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I want the youngsters here to understand what has taken place in a short period of time. Afghanistan was once ruled by the Taliban. Young girls couldn't go to school. If their mothers didn't toe the ideological line of the haters,

they'd be whipped in the public squares and sometime shot in the stadiums. Because we acted in our own self-defense, millions of Afghan citizens went to the polls to vote for the President, and the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march. Freedom is precious. Freedom is powerful. And we're better off for it.

Iraq will have Presidential elections in January. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and the brutality of Saddam Hussein. Fifty million people now live in freedom because we acted to secure ourselves. We're more secure. The world is better off as freedom is on the march. I believe everybody yearns to be free in this world. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget, your wallet. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I have kept my word. We raised the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We created a 10-percent bracket to help working families. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes. We're helping our small-business owners. And as a result of these policies, real after-tax income, the money in your pocket, is up by about 10 percent since I got into office.

Think about what this economy has been through. Tell your friends and neighbors what we have overcome. Six months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline, indicating the recession that came. Then we had some corporate scandals. And then we got attacked, and those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

Our economic policies are working. They've led us back to growth. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added more than 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Farm income is up. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high. The unemployment rate in Florida is 4.5 percent. We're moving forward, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

My opponent has very different plans for your budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I proposed the tax relief to help our families and get this economy going again, he voted against the higher child tax credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. He voted against the help to small businesses. If he had had his way, the average middle-class family in America would have been paying $2,000 more in Federal income taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's part of a pattern. The Senator has voted 10 times to raise gasoline taxes since he's been in the Senate. And all told, during his 20 years in the United States Senate, my opponent has voted 98 times to raise taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Think about that. That's about five times every year he served. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*]

During this campaign, he's made a lot of big promises. As a matter of fact, he's promised about $2.2 trillion in new spending. That's with a "T." [*Laughter*] That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we?

By running up the top two brackets, guess who he's taxing? He's taxing job creators. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses in America. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. It's a bad idea to tax the job creators in this country.

Raising the top two brackets will raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars, so as you can tell, there's a tax gap. There's a difference between what he has promised and what he can deliver. Now, you know who gets to fill that tax gap, don't you? I'll tell you one other thing about taxing the rich. The rich, during tax time, hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to slip the tab and to stick you with

the bill. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Florida and win a great victory on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A good education and quality health care are important for a successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end and to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in our schools. I kept my word, passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which is a great piece of legislation. It brings high standards to our classrooms and makes our schools accountable to our parents. We're seeing progress. Math and reading scores are rising. We are closing an achievement gap all across America. We will build on these reforms. We'll extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll continue to improve life—the life of our families by making health care more affordable and accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts so small businesses can cover their workers and more families are able to get health care accounts they can manage and call their own. We'll create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do. We will help our families in need by expanding community health centers. We'll make sure every child eligible is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program.

And we'll help patients and doctors everywhere by doing something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care and running good doctors out of practice. I met too many ob-gyns that are having trouble making ends meet, and so they're quitting the practice. I met too many women who are driving miles to get the good health care they need for themselves and their child. And this isn't right for America. You can't be pro-trial-lawyer and pro-doctor and pro-patient at the same time. You have to pick. My opponent made his pick. He put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket. I stand for medical liability reform—now.

Senator Kerry has a different point of view on our schools and health care system. Listen, he voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, but now he wants to weaken the accountability standards. He has proposed including measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students can read or write or add and subtract. He voted against health savings accounts. He opposes association health plans that will help our small businesses. He voted 10 times against medical liability reform.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now he's proposing a big Government health care plan that would cause 8 million families to lose private coverage they get at work and have to go onto a Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage under his proposal would be enrolled in a Government plan. In one of our debates, he said with a straight face that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself when I heard that. [*Laughter*] The Government has a lot to do with it. His plan would move America down the road to Federal control of health care, and that's the wrong road for American families. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

Fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I have kept my word. You know, leaders in both political parties have talked about Medicare for years—for years. We got the job done. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 on their card this year and 600 next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage, even though it was supported by the AARP and other seniors groups. Later he said, quote, "If I am President, we're going to repeal that phony bill." A little later on, he said, "No, I don't want to repeal it." Kind of sounds familiar. As your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we have worked so hard to pass and keep the promise of Medicare for our senior citizens.

And we will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Every election, desperate politicians try to scare our seniors about Social Security. It is predictable, and it's beginning to happen again. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors about what happened in the 2000 campaign. They said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." Now, you might remember that. Well, tell them George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks, and baby boomers like me are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to think about our children and our grandchildren. We need to make sure that when they retire, there's a Social Security system available to meet their needs. And that is why I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and put it in a personal account. It will earn a better rate of return, a personal account they call their own, a personal account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent is taking a different approach. He talks about protecting Social Security. He's the only candidate in this race that voted to tax Social Security benefits eight times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide. And when it comes to the next generation, he has offered no reform. The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to make sure Social Security is around when a younger generation of America needs it.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so critical to keeping America's families strong. And my opponent and I are miles apart. I believe marriage is a sacred institution. Marriage is a pillar of our civilization, and I will always defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and my predecessor, President Bill Clinton, signed it into law. Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on the most difficult of issues. Republicans and Democrats and many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against parental notification laws.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent has said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I understand most American families do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Lakeland, Florida.

All of these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our families, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. And this decision is in the best of hands, because the decision rests with the American people.

I can't tell you how optimistic I am about the future of this country. I see a better day for everybody. You know, one of my favorite

quotes was written by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not the side to see the day that is gone." My opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that is coming.

We've been lot—we've been through a lot together in the last nearly 4 years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we can see the valley below. We'll protect our families and build their prosperity and defend our deepest values. We'll spread freedom in the world and the peace we all want.

Four years ago, when I traveled your State asking for the vote, I pledged to restore honor and dignity to the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all. On to victory!

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at Ty Cobb Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings of Florida; Paula Dockery, majority whip, Florida State Senate; country music entertainer Trini Triggs; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi.

Remarks in Melbourne, Florida

October 23, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming today.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming today. We're getting close to voting time—actually, you already are voting here. We're traveling your State not only asking for the vote, I'm here to ask for your help. I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors and remind them they have a duty to vote in a democracy. And as you're getting people to do their duty, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. Remind people that if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I really enjoy campaigning. I like to be out with the people. I like to tell people why I'm running and what I intend to do as your President for 4 more years. Perhaps the most important reason of all for you to put me back into office is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. Listen, some of you all may appreciate this—I think some of you will appreciate this. When I asked Laura to marry me—well, we'd been to the seventh grade together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. We became reacquainted later on. She was a public school librarian at the time. And when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me that I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, warm, strong First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I fully admit it, he doesn't have the most hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

And I'm proud of brother Jeb. The thing I like about him is you know where he stands. He's not one of these people that takes a poll or a focus group to kind of find his way. And not only that, when times were tough here in the State of Florida, I saw firsthand his steady leadership. Though I came and tried to remind the people of this State the Federal Government would do everything we can to help the people, the truth of the matter is, Florida's great strength is not only your Governor but the fact that neighbor loved neighbor, neighbor helped neighbor. Florida showed great character during these times of testing.

I'm honored to call Buzz Aldrin friend. I appreciate him being here today. He's one of the great pioneers of America. I appreciate you, Buzz, coming. I want to thank you for the example you have set for future pioneers.

I want to thank Congressman Dave Weldon for his service to the great State of Florida. I appreciate you being here, Dave. When you go to the polls, make sure you vote for Mel Martinez. He'll make a great United States Senator. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank my friends in Little Texas for having played for you all today.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls, who have worked so hard to make this rally such a fantastic rally. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do, and that is turn out the vote. And with your help, we'll carry Florida again and win a great victory on November the 2d.

We have just 10 days to go in this election, and voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates and dramatically different approaches and records. You know where I stand, and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I am proudly running on my record. And the Senator is running from his, and there is a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. At a time when our country has much to accomplish and much more to do, I offer a record of reform and results.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and to our future.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All our progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any we have faced before. Terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous. They are determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for our homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're transforming our military. We will not have a draft. We will have an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We are resolute, and we are determined to protect the people.

And we're succeeding. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

My opponent has a very different approach. He says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all"——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——end quote. And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His top policy adviser has questioned whether it is even a war at all, saying that, "It's just a metaphor, like the war on poverty."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Anyone who thinks we're fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face. You cannot win a war if you are not convinced we are even in one.

Senator Kerry also misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. After voting to authorize force against Saddam Hussein, after calling it the right decision when I sent troops into Iraq, the Senator now calls it the "wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator used to recognize that Saddam Hussein was a gathering

threat who hated America. After all, the Senator said so. He used to recognize that Saddam was a state sponsor of terror with a history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. After all, the Senator said so. He used to understand that Saddam was a major source of instability in the Middle East. After all, the Senator said so. And when he voted to authorize force, the Senator must have recognized the nightmare scenario that terrorists might somehow access weapons of mass destruction. Senator Kerry seems to have forgotten all that as his position has evolved over the course of this campaign. You might call it election amnesia.

I knew it then, and I know it now, that America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Senator Kerry now calls Iraq a "diversion." But the case of just one terrorist shows how wrong his thinking is. A man named Zarqawi is responsible for planting car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. He ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan—until we arrived. And then he fled to Baghdad, where he plotted and planned and where he's fighting us today. He publicly announced his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. See, if Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting American and Iraqi forces in Iraq, what does my opponent think they'd be doing? Peaceful small-business men? [*Laughter*] Working for benevolent societies? Our troops will defeat the likes of Zarqawi so we do not have to face him in our own cities.

The choice in this election could not be clearer. You cannot lead our Nation to the decisive victory on which the security of every American family depends if you do not see the true dangers of the post-September the 11th era. My opponent has a September 10th point of view. At his convention, he declared his strategy would be to respond to attacks after America is hit. And that would be too late. America—in our debates, he said we can defend America only if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing about this far from me when he said it. Listen, I'll work with our friends and allies. We'll build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank those who wear the uniform who are here today. Thank you for your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here.

And I assure you, we will continue to support our troops in harm's way. That is why I went to the United States Congress and proposed $87 billion in supplemental funding, to make sure our troops had that which they need to complete their missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We received great bipartisan support for that funding. As you gather the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors of this startling statistic: Only 4 Members of the United States Senate—4 out of 100—voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against providing the funding necessary to supporting our troops in harm's way, and 2 of those 4 were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, "Why did you make the vote?" And you might remember the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." They kept pressing him, and he finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We will continue to protect America by spreading freedom and liberty. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. Free nations do not breed resentment and export terror. Free nations become allies against these ideologues of hate.

Think about what's happened in Afghanistan. Because we acted to defend ourselves, that society has gone from darkness to light. Three-and-a-half years ago, young girls couldn't go to school. Their mothers were taken to the public square and whipped if they did not toe the line of the barbarians who ran that country. Because we acted, millions voted in a Presidential election. The first voter in the Afghan Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Iraq has a strong Prime Minister. They'll be holding Presidential elections in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. I believe people in the Middle East want to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget, your wallet. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 to help our moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent to help our working families. We reduced taxes on everybody who paid taxes. As a result of these good policies, real after-tax income—that's the money you have left in your pocket—is about—is up about 10 percent since I've been your President.

When you're out gathering up the vote, remind the people what we have been through in this country. Six months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline—6 months before getting there. That foretold a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. Then those attacks on our country cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. This economy is growing. We're growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million * new jobs since August of 2003. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Farm income is up. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. And your unemployment rate in the great State of Florida is 4.5 percent.

My opponent has very different plans for your family's budget. He intends to take a bigger chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the higher child tax credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, an average middle-class family would be paying 2,000 more dollars a year to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's part of a pattern. See, he's voted 10 times to raise taxes on gasoline. All told, during his 20 years as a United States Senator, my opponent has voted 98 times to raise taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's about five times a year. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] During this campaign, he's also made a lot of big, expensive promises. He's promised about $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's with a "T"—trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, oh, don't worry. We'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? See, there's a gap. When he says "tax the rich," he can raise about 600 to 800 billion dollars. So there's a gap between what he has promised and what he can raise, and guess who usually gets to fill that gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Florida and win a great victory in November.

The third choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A good education and quality health care are important to successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to our classrooms and to make schools accountable to our parents. We're seeing progress. Math and reading scores are rising. We're closing an achievement gap amongst minority students. We'll build on these reforms and extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll continue to improve our lives—lives for our families, by making health care more affordable and accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts so small businesses

* White House correction.

can cover their workers and more families are able to get health care accounts they own and manage themselves. We'll create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will help families in need by expanding community health centers. We'll make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program to make sure health care is available and affordable to you.

We will do something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and driving good doctors out of practice. I've met too many ob-gyns who are being driven out of practice because of these lawsuits. And I've met too many women who are worried about whether they're going to get the quality health care they need to bring their baby into life. We have a national problem with health care and these lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Senator Kerry has a different point of view on our schools. He voted for the No Child Left Behind Act but now wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposed including measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students can read and write and add and subtract. He voted against health savings accounts. He opposes association health plans. He voted 10 times against medical liability reform. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now he's proposing a big-Government health care plan that would cause 8 million families to lose the private coverage they get at work, put them on the health—the Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who would get coverage under his proposal would be enrolled in a Government program.

In one of our debates, he tried to tell Americans, when it comes to his health care plan, and I'd like to quote him, "Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself. My opponent's plan would move America down the road to Federal control of health care, and that is the wrong road for America's families. He can run—he can run in camo, but he cannot hide.

In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. Leaders in both political parties have talked about strengthening Medicare for years. We got the job done. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Our low-income seniors are getting $600 this year and another $600 next year to help pay for their prescriptions. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage, even though it was supported by AARP and other seniors groups. Campaigning, he said, "If I am the President, I am going to repeal that phony bill." Then a little later on, he said, "No, I don't want to repeal it." That sounds familiar.

As your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we worked so hard to pass, and we will keep the promise of Medicare for America's seniors. And we will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And we will strengthen Social Security for a younger generation.

Every election, desperate politicians try to scare seniors about Social Security. You might remember the campaign in 2000. They were saying, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." Remind your friends and neighbors that George W. got elected and our seniors got their checks. You will continue to get your checks. Baby boomers like me are in good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to make

sure Social Security will be there when they need it. And that is why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account, a personal savings account they call their own, that the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach about Social Security. He talks about protecting Social Security. But he's the only candidate in this race who voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits. That's his record. He can run from it, but he cannot hide.

And when it comes to the next generation, he's offered nothing. American families have a clear choice. My opponent wants to scare the seniors of today and do nothing to secure the system for the seniors of tomorrow. I will keep the promise of Social Security and Medicare and strengthen these great systems for our children and our grandchildren.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping our families strong. And here, my opponent and I are miles apart. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization, and I will defend it. This isn't a partisan issue. You know, when Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it and my predecessor, Bill Clinton, signed the bill into law. Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats and many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortions. I proudly signed that bill. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against parental notification laws.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

In the course of this campaign, my opponent has said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Most American families don't look to Hollywood as the source for values. The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Melbourne, Florida.

All of these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our families, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. The decision is in the best hands, because the decision belongs to the American people.

I see a great day for America. One of my favorite quotes was written by a Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It's the side that sees the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." You know, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that is coming.

We've been through a lot together over the last 3¾ years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we see the valley below. We'll protect our families and build on their prosperity. We'll defend the deepest values of our country. We will spread freedom and the peace we all want. We'll do everything I can to make America safer.

Four years ago when I traveled this great State, I made this pledge, that if I was honored with the office, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of that office. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. at the Space Coast Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the

keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Apollo 11 astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida; country music entertainers Little Texas; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in Jacksonville, Florida

October 23, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you so much for coming today. Brother Jeb said, "Why don't we go to Jacksonville; maybe a couple of folks will show up to say hello." Laura and I thank you so very much for coming out on a Saturday afternoon. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. People are voting here in Florida. You need to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. And by the way, when you're getting people to go to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. With your help, we'll carry Florida again and win a great victory in November.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as you—I never have to give a political speech." I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. Laura is giving a lot of speeches, and when people see her speak, they see a warm, compassionate, great First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back into office. Perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and his ability to get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of my brother, your Governor, Jeb Bush. You don't have to worry about where he stands. He doesn't take a poll or focus group to find out what he should believe. Jeb Bush stands on principle, and when times are tough, he leads this State with compassion. He has done a masterful job of helping to bring comfort for those who have been afflicted by the four hurricanes. Florida showed its true strength not only in your Governor but because people cared for people who were hurting in this State. I am really proud of how Florida handled the four hurricanes.

Mel Martinez is the right man for the United States Senate from Florida. And when you vote for him and put him in office, he'll be joining a fine United States Senator who has joined us today from the State of Utah, Senator Orrin Hatch. Thank you, Senator.

Congressman Ander Crenshaw is doing a great job in the House of Representatives. Thank you, Ander. Congressman Cliff Stearns is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Cliff.

I want to thank the State chief financial officer, Tom Gallagher, for joining us today. I want to thank the mayor of the great city of Jacksonville, Florida, Mayor John Peyton.

When I came in, I had the opportunity to say hello to Nelson Cuba, who's the president of the Jacksonville Fraternal Order of Police. I am proud to have the endorsement of the FOP. I'm proud to be standing with the policemen all across this country.

I want to thank Bill Cerveny and Aaron Tippin for providing such wonderful entertainment here for this great crowd.

I want to thank the people who put on this event. It takes a lot of work to get this many people to come. I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people who are putting up the signs, making the phone calls, turning out the vote. With your help, we will win a great victory on November the 2d.

We have just 10 days to go in this campaign, and voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates and dramatically different approaches and records. You know where I stand, and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I'm running on my record. Senator Kerry's running from his record, and there is a reason why. There is a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. I am a compassionate conservative and proudly so. At a time when our country has much to accomplish and

much more to do, I offer a record of reform and results.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and to our future.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All our progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. The most—this is the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any we have faced before. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous. They are determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for the homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our All-Volunteer Army. We will not have a draft. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We are staying on the offensive. We are relentless. We are determined to protect the American people, and we're succeeding. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we are on their trail.

My opponent has a different approach. He says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all," end quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His top foreign policy adviser has questioned whether it's even a war at all, saying "That's just a metaphor, like the war on poverty."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Anyone who thinks we're fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face, and you cannot win a war if you're not convinced we're even in one.

Senator Kerry misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. After voting to authorize force against Saddam Hussein, after calling it the right decision when I sent troops into Iraq, the Senator now calls it the "wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator used to recognize that Saddam Hussein was a gathering threat who hated America. After all, the Senator said so. He used to recognize that Saddam was a state sponsor of terror with a history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. After all, the Senator said so. He used to understand that Saddam was a major source of instability in the Middle East. After all, the Senator said so. And when he voted to authorize force, the Senator must have recognized the nightmare scenario that terrorists might somehow access weapons of mass destruction. Senator Kerry seems to have forgotten all that as his position has evolved during the course of this campaign. You might call it election amnesia. [*Laughter*]

I knew then and I know now that America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Senator Kerry now calls Iraq a "diversion."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But the case of just one terrorist shows how wrong his thinking is. A man named Zarqawi is responsible for planting car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. He ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan until American troops arrived. Then he fled to Baghdad, where he's fighting us today. He publicly announced his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. If Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting Iraqi and American forces in Iraq, what does Senator Kerry think they would be doing? Simple shopkeepers? [*Laughter*] Running benevolence societies? I don't think so. And our

troops will defeat Zarqawi and his friends and allies overseas so we do not have to face them in America.

The choice in this election could not be clearer. You cannot lead our Nation to decisive victory, on which the security of every American family depends, if you do not see the true dangers of the post-September the 11th world. My opponent has a September the 10th point of view. At his convention, he declared that his strategy will be to respond to attacks after America is hit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That would be too late. In our debates, he said we can defend America only if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing about that far away from me when he said it. I'll work with our friends and allies. We'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank those who wear the uniform who have joined us today. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example. I want to thank the military families who are here today. And I'm going to assure you, so long as I'm the Commander in Chief, our Federal Government will make sure your loved ones have what is necessary to complete their missions.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003, asking for $87 billion in supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. I appreciate the strong bipartisan support for this very important request. When you're out gathering up the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors that only four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the funding necessary to support our troops in harm's way, and two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him, "Why did you make the vote?" And he issued perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They've asked him time and time again, and he must have given five or six explanations of that vote. At one point, he said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We'll protect America by leading the cause of freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I want you to remember what has taken place in Afghanistan in a short period of time. That country has gone from darkness to light. Three-and-a-half years ago, young girls couldn't go to school. If their mothers did not toe the line of the ideologues of hate who ran Afghanistan, they were whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. Because we acted in our self-interest, because we upheld doctrine, 25 million people in Afghanistan are free. Millions went to vote in a Presidential election. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman in Afghanistan.

Iraq will be holding elections in January. Think about how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and America is more secure because of it.

I believe every person in the world wants to be free. I believe this because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the man coming out of the rubble—we were doing our best to console people—he grabbed me by the arm; he looked me in the eye; and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We raised the child credit. We reduced the

marriage penalty. Listen, our Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent to help our working families. We reduced income taxes for everyone who pays taxes. As a result of these good policies, after-tax income, money in your pocket that you can spend, is up by about 10 percent since I became your President.

We've been through a lot together. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors that the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. And then we had a recession and corporate scandals and the attacks on our country. We lost nearly one million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added more than 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our farmers and ranchers are making a living. The small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high, and the unemployment rate in Florida is 4.5 percent.

My opponent has very different plans for your family's budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the higher child tax credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, an average middle-class family would be paying 2,000 more dollars a year to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's part of a pattern. See, the Senator voted 10 times to raise taxes on gasoline. All told, during his 20 years in the United States Senate, he has voted 98 times to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's about five times a year. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] During this campaign, he's also made a lot of big, expensive promises. He's promised $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

They asked him how he's going to pay for it. He said, "Oh, we'll just pay for it by taxing the rich." There's a problem with that promise. When you run up the top two brackets, you're taxing many small businesses. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses in America. Taxing small businesses is bad economic policy.

And there's a gap between what he's promised and what he can deliver. Running up the top two brackets like he wants to do raises between 600 and 800 billion dollars. And remember, there's $2.2 trillion of spending promises. So there's a gap, a gap between what he's promised and what he says he's going to pay. And guess who usually fills the gap?

Audience member. We do!

The President. You do. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we are going to carry Florida and win on November the 2d.

Third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I have kept my word. We passed good, sound education reforms to bring high standards to the classroom and make our schools more accountable to parents and teachers. We're seeing progress. Math and reading scores are rising. We're closing the achievement gap by helping minority students. We will build on these reforms and extend them to our high schools so that no child in America is left behind.

And we'll continue to improve our—life for our families by making health care more affordable and accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts so more small businesses can cover their workers and more families are able to get health care accounts they manage and they call their own. We'll create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will help our families in need

by expanding community health centers. We'll make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program.

And we'll help patients and doctors all across this Nation by doing something about the frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running up your costs and running good doctors out of practice. I have met too many good docs being run out of practice because of these junk lawsuits. I met too many ob-gyns who are not able to practice their skill. I met too many pregnant women who are having to drive miles, which isn't right. Our expectant moms need good, quality health care, and these lawsuits are making it tough for them to find good, quality health care. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and the patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Senator Kerry has a different point of view on our schools and health care. Listen, he voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, but now he wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposed including measures like teacher attendance to judge whether students can read and write and add and subtract. He voted against health savings accounts. He opposes association health plans. He has voted 10 times against medical liability reform. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now he's proposing a health care plan in this campaign, a big Government health care plan that would cause 8 million families to lose private coverage they get at work and have to go on a Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage under his proposal would be enrolled in a Government program.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In one of our debates, he looked in that camera and he told the Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] My opponent's plan would move America down the road to Federal control of health care. It's the wrong road for American families. He can run from his plan——

Audience members. But he cannot hide!

The President. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I have kept my word. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 this year and $600 next year to help pay for prescriptions. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that includes prescription drug coverage, even though it was supported by AARP and other seniors groups. This campaign, he said, "If I'm the President, we're going to repeal that phony bill." A little later he said, "No, I don't want to repeal it." That sounds familiar. As your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we have worked so hard to pass and keep the promise of Medicare for our country's seniors.

We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we will strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Every campaign is predictable. It is predictable that you'll hear once again that our seniors will lose their checks. I want you to remind our seniors that in the 2000 campaign, they said, "If George W. gets elected, the seniors will not get their Social Security checks." You might remember that. Well, remind them of this: George W. got elected, and the seniors got their checks. And the seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to be concerned about children and our grandchildren. We need to make sure that the Social Security system will be there when they need it too. And that

is why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account, a savings account they call their own, a savings account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He talks about protecting Social Security, but he's the only candidate in this race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run——

Audience members. But he cannot hide!

The President. And when it comes to the next generation, he's offered nothing in terms of Social Security reform. The job of the President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together and strengthen Social Security so a younger generation can count on it.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping America's families strong, and here my opponent and I are miles apart. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment. I believe marriage is a pillar of our civilization, and I will always defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and Bill Clinton signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on the difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats and many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I was honored to sign that bill. But Senator Kerry was part of the out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He also voted against parental notification laws——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——and against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I will continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

During this campaign, my opponent has said that you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Most American families do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in communities like Jacksonville, Florida.

All of these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security, the prosperity of our country, the education of our children, and the health of our families, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are—all are at stake. And the decision is in the best hands, the hands of the American people.

I see a positive future for this country. I see a better day. One of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It's the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During this campaign, my opponent has spent much of his campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that is coming.

We have been through a lot together in the last nearly 4 years. Because we have done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we can see the valley below. We'll protect our families, build up the prosperity of this country, and defend our deepest values. We will spread freedom in this world and achieve the peace we all long for.

When I campaigned in your State 4 years ago, I said if you gave me the honor of serving, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at Alltel Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida; country music entertainers Bill Cerveny and Aaron Tippin; former President

Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks in Alamogordo, New Mexico

October 24, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Laura and I are so pleased to be here in Alamogordo. It's great to be back in the great State of New Mexico.

We're getting close to voting time, and I'm here to ask for your vote and for your help. Tell your friends and neighbors in the coffee shops and community centers and places of worship, we have a duty to vote in the United States. Get them headed to the polls. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller of Georgia. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to vote for Bush-Cheney.

I'm keeping really good company in the First Lady. You know, when I—I don't know if you know this or not, we both grew up kind of around the corner. As a matter of fact, we were in the seventh grade together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland. And then we became reacquainted. She was a public school librarian when I met her again.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—moment!

The President. It sure was. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just make me a promise." I said, "Okay, what is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she did not hold me to that promise. She's giving speeches all over the country, and when people see her speak, they see a compassionate, warm, strong First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Now, look, I admit it—I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be sharing this platform with a great United States Senator in Pete Domenici. You know, if you had to describe Senator Domenici, you would call him a class act. And he is. I know you're proud of him, and Laura and I are proud to call him friend. I want to thank Congressman Steve Pearce and his wife, Cynthia.

I want to thank the Alamogordo Tiger Band for being here today. It's good to be in country where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. I want to thank the people who have helped put on this rally and are putting up the signs, making the phone calls, turning people out to vote. There is no doubt in my mind that with your help, we will carry New Mexico and win a great victory in November. *Con su apoyo, vamos a ganar.*

You know, we've just got 9 days to go. And the voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and records. You know where I stand, and sometimes you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I'm proudly running on mine. The Senator is running from his. [*Laughter*] And there's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. At a time when our country has much to accomplish and much more to do, I offer a record of reform and a record of results.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and our future.

The first clear choice is the most important, because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any we have faced before. The terrorists that killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they are determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people.

If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for our homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're transforming our All-Volunteer Army. There will not be a draft. We're staying on the offensive. We're relentless. We are determined to protect the American people. And we're succeeding. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

My opponent has a very different approach. He says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all"——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——end quote. [*Laughter*] And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. His top foreign policy advisers question whether we're even in a war at all, saying, "The war on terror is just like a metaphor, kind of like the war on poverty." Anyone who thinks we're fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face. You cannot win a war if you are not convinced we are even in one.

My opponent also misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. After voting to authorize force against Saddam Hussein, after calling it the right decision when I sent troops into Iraq, the Senator now calls it the "wrong war." The Senator used to recognize that Saddam Hussein was a gathering threat who hated America. After all, he said so. He used to recognize that Saddam was a state sponsor of terror with a history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. Even so, he said so. He used to understand that Saddam was a major source of instability in the Middle East. He said so. And when he voted to authorize force, the Senator must have recognized the nightmare scenario that terrorists might somehow access weapons of mass destruction.

Senator Kerry seems to have forgotten all that as his position has evolved during the course of this campaign. You might call it election-year amnesia. [*Laughter*] I know then—I knew then and I know now that America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. We have a different point of view when it comes to defending America. Senator Kerry now calls Iraq a "diversion." But the case of just one terrorist shows how wrong his thinking is. A man named Zarqawi is responsible for planting car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. He ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan—until coalition forces arrived. And then he fled to Iraq, where he's fighting us today. He swore his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. If Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting Iraqi and American forces in Iraq, what does Senator Kerry think they would be doing? Peaceful small-business owners? [*Laughter*] Running a benevolent society? [*Laughter*]

Our troops will defeat Zarqawi and his likes overseas in Iraq so we do not have to face them here at home.

The choice in this election could not be clearer. You cannot lead our Nation to decisive victory on which the security of every American family depends if you do not see the true dangers of the post-September the 11th world. My opponent has a September 10th point of view. At his convention, he declared that his strategy will be to respond to attacks after America is hit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Those were his words. That would be too late. In our debates, he said we can defend America if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing right about right there. Listen, I'll work with our friends and allies. We'll continue to build strong coalitions to keep us secure. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank those who wear our Nation's uniform. I want to thank our great United States military. It's such an incredible honor to be the Commander in Chief of such

a great military. And our military is great because of the character of the men and women who wear our uniform. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example. I want to thank the military families who are here for your sacrifice.

And I want to assure you that we'll make sure our troops have got all the tools necessary to complete their missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. That's why I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion in supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. It was a vital request. It was necessary. And we got great bipartisan support. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors this startling statistic: Only 4 Members of the United States Senate—4 out of 100—voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the funding necessary to support our troops in combat, and 2 of those 4 were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember, when asked to explain his vote he said, and I quote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I've spent quite a bit of time in New Mexico. I've never heard anybody talk that way in this State. [*Laughter*] They kept pressing him, and he's given a lot of answers about his vote. One of the most interesting ones of all was he said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

And we will continue to protect in America by spreading freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that free nations do not breed resentments and export terror. Free nations become allies in the war against terror.

I want you to tell your children what has taken place in a brief period of time. Tell them what happened in Afghanistan. Because we defended ourselves, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're as equally guilty as the terrorists," 25 million people live in freedom in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school because the ideologues of hate, the Taliban, had such a dim view of the world. And if their mothers didn't toe their line, they were taken into public squares and whipped and sometimes killed in a sports stadium. Because we acted, millions of people in Afghanistan went to vote in a Presidential election. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march.

Iraq will have Presidential elections. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. It is in our interests that we spread liberty. It's in our interests that we help societies become free. I believe people want to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The second clear choice in this election concerns the family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child. We want to help people raise their children. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent to help our working families. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes. As a result of our policies, real, after-tax income—that's money in your pocket—has gone up by about 10 percent since I became the President.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors about what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. Then we had a recession. Then we had corporate scandals. And then we got attacked. And that attack cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. This country is on the road to growth. We're growing at rates as fast as any in 20—nearly 20 years. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. Our farmers and ranchers are making a living. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We've added 1.9 million new jobs in the past 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. And the unemployment rate in New Mexico is 5.3 percent. This economy is getting stronger.

Now, my opponent has a different plan for your budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it. You know, he voted against the higher child credit and the marriage penalty relief, and he voted against lower tax rates. I want the people to understand that if he had had his way, the average middle class family would be paying $2,000 more in taxes to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's part of a pattern. All told, during his 20 years in the United States Senate, he's voted to increase taxes 98 times. That's five times for every year he's been in the Senate. I'd call that a predictable pattern. [*Laughter*] If a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] During this campaign, he's made a lot of big promises too—a lot of them. As a matter of fact, he's promised about $2.2 trillion worth of new spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him, "How you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." The problem is, is that his ledger doesn't add up, see. If you run up the top two brackets like he said, it's going to raise about 600 to 800 billion dollars. That's far short of 2.2 trillion. And when there's a gap like that, guess who usually gets stuck with the bill?

Audience member. We do!

The President. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry New Mexico and win a great victory on November the 2d.

The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important for a successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which is bringing high standards to our classrooms and making schools accountable to our parents. We're seeing great progress across this country. Math and reading scores are on the rise. We're closing the achievement gap. More and more Latino youngsters are learning how to read and write and add and subtract. And the country is better off for it. We'll build on these reforms. We'll extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll continue to improve lives for our families by making health care more affordable and more accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts so small businesses can cover their workers and more families are able to get the health care accounts that they manage and own. We'll expand—create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We'll help families in need by expanding community health centers, make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance programs.

And we're going to help patients and doctors everywhere by doing something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good docs out of practice. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. And my opponent made his choice. He put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and patients of New Mexico. I am for medical liability reform—now.

We have a difference when it comes to health care. My opponent voted against health savings accounts. He's voted against association health plans. He's voted 10 times against medical liability reform. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

And now he's proposing a new plan, a new idea, which is a big-Government health care plan. That's what it is. It would cause about 8 million families to lose private coverage they get at work and have to go on a Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage would be enrolled with the Federal Government. We just have a different philosophy. You know, in one of the debates, he actually looked in the camera with a straight face and he said, when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] His plan

would move America down the road to Federal control of health care, and that is wrong road for America's families.

In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare. By adding prescription drug coverage, I kept my word. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 worth of help this year and next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Listen, every election there is a predictable event that takes place, and that is they run TV ads saying to our seniors, "If George W. gets elected, you're not going to get your checks." That's what happened in 2000. They said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their Social Security checks." You might remember that. In this campaign, as we're coming down the stretch, tell your friends, George W. got elected and the seniors got their checks. And the seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security Trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be there when they retire. So I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account that they own and that the Government cannot take away.

Once again, my opponent takes a different approach. You know, he talked about protecting Social Security. I want to remind you and I want you to remind your friends and neighbors that he voted eight times to tax Social Security benefits. That's his record. He can run, but he cannot hide.

It's the job of the President to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The other night at the debates, when I talked about Social Security, he defended the status quo. He had nothing to offer to our younger workers. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together and strengthen Social Security so our children and our grandchildren will have a system available for them when they retire.

And the fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping America's families strong. And here, my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment. It is a pillar of our civilization, and I will always defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act during my predecessor's time, defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported that bill and my predecessor signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats and many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I signed that law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

In the course of this campaign, he said the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, most American families do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found in places like Alamogordo, New Mexico.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and the education of families, the retirement of our seniors, the direction of our culture

are all at stake. And the decision is in the best of hands; it's in the hands of the American people.

I see a good day for America. I clearly see a better tomorrow for all of us. One of my favorite quotes was written by a Texan from right down the road in El Paso, Texas. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It's the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." You know, when you really listen to the words in this campaign, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

We've been through a lot together over the last 3¾ years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we see the valley below. We'll protect our families. We'll build on our prosperity. We'll defend our deepest values. We will spread freedom and liberty around the world, and that will help us keep the peace we all want.

You know, when I campaigned in New Mexico 4 years ago asking for the vote, I said that if you gave me the honor to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. at Alamogordo High School. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Statement on the Death of James Cardinal Hickey

October 24, 2004

Cardinal James Hickey was an inspirational spiritual leader who brought comfort to the sick and help and hope to those in need. He was a caring and compassionate man. For 20 years, he led the Archdiocese of Washington with great dignity and conviction. He will be deeply missed by his church, the Washington community, and all of the people throughout America whose lives he touched so deeply. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to his family, friends, and loved ones.

Proclamation 7837—United Nations Day, 2004

October 24, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On United Nations Day, we commemorate the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and recognize its many contributions to advancing peace and human rights around the world.

Our Declaration of Independence and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaim the equal value and dignity of every human life. That dignity is honored by the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, protection of private property, free speech, equal justice, and religious tolerance. These founding documents affirm that the bright line between justice and injustice is the same in every age, every culture, and every nation.

Today, the United Nations is helping advance these ideals in many places around the globe. The U.N. assisted Afghanistan in making history when Afghan women and men voted in a democratic Presidential election earlier this month. In Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, and other nations, the U.N. has been working to bring security, stability, and humanitarian assistance to people in need. From Africa to the Caribbean to Asia, the U.N. is helping to turn societies away from old conflicts, overcome persistent poverty, and fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The United States remains committed to the high ideals of the U.N. as stated in its charter: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America,

by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 2004, as United Nations Day. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States to honor the observance of United Nations Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:08 a.m., October 26, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 27.

Remarks in Greeley, Colorado

October 25, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming today. Laura and I are so honored so many came out to say hello. You have lifted our spirits. Thank you for being here. It's great to be here in Greeley, Colorado. You know, I am told the last sitting President to visit Greeley was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who came right before he won his second term. With your help, history will be repeated.

And that's what we are here to do; we're here to ask for your help. We'd like you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. Remind them we have a duty in our democracy to vote. When you get them headed to the polls, tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

So Laura and I were in the seventh grade together in west Texas. And then we became reacquainted when she—she was a public school librarian at the time. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, but make me one promise." I said, "What is that?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's given a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a strong, compassionate, great First Lady.

I am proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Look, I readily concede that he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] But you'll be pleased to know I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

You know, Laura, and I were able to welcome the Giulianis to our ranch in Crawford, Texas, last night. We know him more—I know him better than I knew him as mayor. I know him as a person, a compassionate, strong leader. I am proud to have Rudy and Judith Giuliani traveling with us. I'm proud to have your support, Mr. Mayor. And I appreciate your great service to our country.

And like the mayor, I recognize that you've got a great Governor in Governor Bill Owens, and I want to thank his wife, Frances, and daughter, Monica, and son, Brett, for being with us today.

I want to thank Senator Wayne Allard for his great service to the State of Colorado. And his wife, Joan, is with us today. I'm proud to stand with the next Senator from Colorado, Pete Coors. I appreciate Marilyn being here. And when he wins, he'll be taking the place of a fine man in Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. And I know you're proud of the Congresswoman from this district, Marilyn Musgrave. We're proud you're here, Marilyn. I appreciate Steve being here.

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I appreciate Congressman Bob Schaffer for being here. Congressman, I appreciate working together to make sure this party stays united coming down the stretch.

I want to thank Mark Wills, the country and western singer who is here. He likes to sing in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. I want to thank Kenny Cordova & The Olde Rock Band. I'm proud to be up here with a man who can hit that baseball in Todd Helton. We got to know him a little while back; we had he and his wife to the White House for dinner. And he can sure play. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank those who wear the uniform who are with us here today. Thank you for your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example. I want to thank the military families who are here today, for your sacrifice.

But most of all, I want to thank the rest of you for coming. I appreciate what you have done on behalf of our campaign and what you're going to do. Keep putting up the signs, making the phone calls, turning out the vote, and we're going to win a great victory on November the 2d.

We're coming down the stretch in the last week of this campaign. I will continue to talk about my vision for a more hopeful America. I am committed to low taxes, spending discipline. I'm committed to a sound energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In a new term, we'll continue to work to make sure our farmers and ranchers can make a decent living. In a new term, we'll continue to work to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit in America is strong so small businesses can thrive and succeed. In a new term, we'll stay on the path of reform and results in our schools so no child is left behind in America. In a new term, we'll make sure health care is more affordable and accessible for all our families and small businesses. In a new term, we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors and strengthen the system for our children and our grandchildren. We will protect marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I'll name judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

And all the progress we hope to make depends on the security of our Nation. We face enemies who hate our country and would do anything to harm us. I'll fight these enemies with every asset of our national power, and we will do our duty and protect the American people.

In the last 4 years, we've been through a lot of history. We saw a ruthless, sneak attack on the United States. We learned of heroism on doomed airplanes. We saw the bravery of rescuers running toward danger. We've seen our military bring freedom to the oppressed and justice to our enemies. Our Nation has shown our character to the world. We are proud to be Americans.

Now we are nearing the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. The people of the United States will choose the leader of the free world in the middle of a global war. The choice is not only between two candidates; it is between two directions in the conduct of the war on terror. Will America return to the defensive, reactive mind set that sought to manage the dangers to our country?

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Or will we fight a real war with the goal of victory?

In every critical aspect, in every critical respect, my opponent and I see the war on terror differently, and the Americans need to consider these differences as they make a vital choice. First, I believe that America wins wars by fighting on the offensive. When I saw those images of the fire and death on September the 11th, I made a decision: Our country will not sit back and wait for future attacks; we will prevent those attacks by going after the enemy.

We are waging a global campaign from the mountains of Central Asia to the deserts of the Middle East, from the Horn of Africa to the Philippines. And those efforts are succeeding. Since September the 11th, 2001, more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

After September the 11th, we set a new direction for American policy and enforced a doctrine that is clear to all: "If you supported or harbored terrorists, you are equally guilty of terrorist murder." We destroyed the terror camps that trained thousands of killers in Afghanistan. We removed the Taliban from power. We have persuaded Governments in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to recognize the enemy and to join the fight. We ended the regime of Saddam Hussein, which sponsored terror. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. We sent a clear message to Libya, which has now given up its weapons of mass destruction programs. We have acted through diplomacy and force to shrink the area where

the terrorists can freely operate. And that strategy has the terrorists on the run.

My opponent has a different view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He says that fighting terrorists in the Middle East, America has, quote, "created terrorists where they did not exist," end quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. This is his argument, that terrorists are somehow less dangerous or fewer in number if America avoids provoking them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the enemy. We are dealing with killers who have made the death of Americans the calling of their lives. If America were not fighting these killers west of Baghdad and in the mountains of Afghanistan and elsewhere, what does Senator Kerry think they would do? Would they be living productive lives of service and charity? [*Laughter*] Would the terrorists who behead innocent people on camera just be quiet, peaceful citizens if we had not liberated Iraq?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. We are fighting these terrorists with our military in Afghanistan and Iraq and beyond, so we do not have to face them in the streets of our own cities.

America is not to blame for terrorist hatred, and no retreat by America would appease them. We don't create terrorists by fighting them. We defeat the terrorists by fighting them.

Our second big difference concerns Iraq. Victory in Iraq is essential to victory in the war on terror. We have a strategy to achieve that victory. The stakes in that country are high. If a terror regime were allowed to reemerge in Iraq, terrorists would again find a home, a source of funding, and vital support; they would correctly conclude that free nations do not have the will to defend themselves.

As Iraq succeeds as a free society in the heart of the Middle East, an ally in the war on terror, and a model of hopeful reform in a troubled region, the terrorists will suffer a crushing defeat, and every free nation will be more secure.

We are still confronting serious violence from determined enemies. Yet, the Iraqi Interim Government, with American and coalition support, is making progress week by week. Along with Iraqi forces, we're on the offensive in Fallujah, North Babil. We've restored Government control in Samarra, Tall 'AFar, and Najaf. More than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers, police, and border guards are already trained, equipped, and bravely serving their country. More than 200,000 will be in place by the end of next year. An Iraqi independent electoral commission is up and running. Political parties are planning campaigns. A free and fair Iraq elections will be held on schedule this January.

The desperate executions of unarmed Iraqi security forces show the evil nature of the terrorists we fight. It proves these terrorists are enemies of the Iraqi people and the American people and everyone who loves freedom. The terrorist insurgents hate our progress, and they fight our progress, but they will not stop our progress. We will stay on the offense against these terrorists, and we will prevail. We will help the Iraqis get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

My opponent has a different view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator calls America's missions in Iraq a "mistake," a "diversion," a "colossal error."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then he says he's the right man to win the war?

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You cannot win a war you do not believe in fighting.

On Iraq, my opponent has a strategy of pessimism and retreat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's talked about artificial timetables to pull our troops out. He has sent the signal that America's overriding goal in Iraq would be to leave, even if the job is not done.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That sends the wrong message. It sends the wrong message to Iraqis who need to know that America will

not cut and run. That sends the wrong message to the troops of our coalition who need to know that we will honor their sacrifice by completing the mission. My opponent has the wrong strategy for the wrong country at the wrong time.

On this vital front of the war on terror, protest is not a policy, retreat is not a strategy, and failure is not an option. As long as I'm the Commander in Chief, America will never retreat in the face of the terrorists.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Third, American leadership is indispensable to winning the war on terror. Ever since September the 11th, 2001, America has sounded a certain trumpet. We've stated clearly the challenge to civilization. We've rallied many nations to oppose it. More than 90 nations are actively engaged in the war on terror. All 26 nations of NATO have personnel in either Iraq, Afghanistan, or both. NATO has taken leadership of an international force in Afghanistan, the first out-of-area deployment in the history of our Alliance. Japan has deployed forces in Iraq, the first overseas mission in the history of their democracy. Forces from South Korea are there. America has led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

My opponent takes a different approach.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He believes that instead of leading with confidence, America must submit to what he calls a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. [*Laughter*] I was standing right here when he said it. As far as I can tell, that means our country must get permission from foreign capitals before we act in our own defense.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As President, I will always work with other countries. I will seek their advice. But there is a world of difference between working with good allies and giving a few reluctant nations veto power over our national security. I will never, never submit our national security decisions to veto of a foreign government.

In addition to a "global test," my opponent promises what he calls a "golden age" of diplomacy, to charm critical governments all over the world.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I don't see much diplomatic skill in Senator Kerry's habit of insulting America's closest friends. He's called the countries serving alongside us in Iraq, quote, "a trumped up coalition of the bribed, the coerced, the bought, and the extorted."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Even last week, my opponent said that we have, quote, "hardly anyone with us in Iraq." That is a deeply offensive way to treat some 30 nations that are in Iraq, and especially the 14 nations that have lost forces in our cause. How can Senator Kerry denigrate the contributions led by the likes of Tony Blair of Great Britain, John Howard of Australia, Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland, and then expect other leaders to stand with America in the future? You cannot expand an alliance by showing contempt for those already in it. In this time of challenge to civilization, America has found strong and responsible allies, and they deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician.

Fourth, I believe that America will gain long-term security by promoting freedom and hope and democracy in the broader Middle East. Our country needs to look ahead. And 20 years from now, if the Middle East is dominated by dictators and mullahs who build weapons of mass destruction and harbor terrorists, our children and grandchildren will live in a nightmare world of danger. That doesn't have to happen.

By taking the side of reformers and democrats in the Middle East, we'll gain allies in the war on terror and isolate the ideology of murder and help defeat the despair and hopelessness that feeds terror. By spreading freedom, by spreading liberty, the world will become a much safer place for future generations. Progress in the broader Middle East toward freedom will not come easily. Yet, that progress is coming faster than many would have said possible. Across a troubled region, we're seeing a movement toward elections, greater rights for women, and open discussion of peaceful reform. The election in Afghanistan this month and the election

in Iraq next January will be counted as landmark events in the history of liberty.

My opponent looks at things differently.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's not only skeptical of democracy in Iraq; he has not made democracy a priority for his foreign policy. But what is his long-term answer to the threat of terror? Is he content to watch and wait as anger and resentment grow for more decades? Is he content to wait as more and more people are angry and hostile and turn to terrorism? Is he content to wait until radicals without conscience gain the weapons to kill without limit? Ignoring the root causes of terror, turning a blind eye to the oppression and despair of millions may be easier in the short run, but we learned on September the 11th, if violence and fanaticism are not opposed at their source, they will find us where we live.

Instead of offering his own agenda for freedom, my opponent complains that we are trying to, quote, "impose democracy on the people of the broader Middle East." Is that what he sees in Afghanistan, unwilling people having democracy forced upon them? We did remove the Taliban by force, but democracy is rising in that country because the Afghan people, like people everywhere, want to live in freedom. No one forced them to register by the millions or to stand in long lines waiting to vote. For many people, that historic election was a day they will never forget. One man in western Kabul arrived to vote at 7 a.m. He said, "I don't want"—he said, "I didn't sleep all night. I wanted to be the first in my polling station." My fellow citizens, freedom is on the march, and it is changing the world.

We are witnessing big and hopeful events. Yet, my opponent refuses to see them. I believe that people across the Middle East are weary of poverty and oppression. I believe everybody wants to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Our fifth great difference concerns the role of the Presidency. A President has to lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics will change, but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, where I stand, and what I intend to do. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or down, I am determined to win the war on terror, and I will always support the men and women who do the fighting.

My opponent has taken a different approach.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry says that we are better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam made us less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry stated in our second debate that he always believed that Saddam Hussein was a threat, except a few questions later, when he said Saddam Hussein was not a threat. [*Laughter*] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*] Now my opponent is throwing out the wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001—[*laughter*]—and that our military had a chance to get him in Tora Bora. This is an unjustified and harsh criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking, and it is what we've come to expect from Senator Kerry.

In fact, our Commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks recently wrote, quote, "The Senator's understanding of events do not square with reality." He was talking about Tora Bora. The General says that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search of terrorists in Tora Bora, and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, Senator Kerry said, quote, "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, Senator Kerry said about Tora Bora, "I think we've been smart. I think administration leadership has done well, and we

are on the right track," end quote. All I can say is that I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

Yet, Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently and dangerously wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he voted against many of the weapons systems critical to our defense buildup. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and President Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East and possess the world's most dangerous weapons. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. [*Laughter*] History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—[*laughter*]—Senator Kennedy was right.

Just last year, American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan needed $87 billion for body armor, hazard pay, vehicles, weapons, and bullets. First, Senator Kerry said, "It would irresponsible to vote against the troops." Then he voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] History has shown that Senator Kerry was right, then wrong—[*laughter*]—then briefly right—[*laughter*]—then wrong again. [*Laughter*]

Since then, the Senator has said the whole matter about the $87 billion is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and in hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden." And he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I ask for your vote.

All the differences I outlined today add up to one big difference: Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. His top foreign policy adviser says, "The war is just a metaphor, like the war on poverty." The Senator's goal is to go back to the mindset of the 1990s, when terrorism was seen as a nuisance, and we fought with subpoenas and a few cruise missiles.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a major problem with that. The era of calm he longs for was only a shallow illusion of peace. We know that throughout the 1990s, the terrorists were training and plotting against us. They saw our complacency as weakness. And so their plans became more ambitious and their attacks more deadly, until, finally, the Twin Towers became Ground Zero and the Pentagon was in flames. My outlook was changed on September the 11th.

A few days after the attacks, I stood with Rudy where the buildings fell. He'll never forget that day, and neither will I. I'll never forget the evil of the enemy and the suffering of our people. I know we're not fighting a metaphor. And I remember the hard—workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." From that day forward, I have gotten up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

In a new term, we will finish the work we have started. We will stand against terror. We will stand for freedom and peace. And on November 2d, my fellow Americans, I ask you stand with me.

God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. at the Island Grove Regional Park Community Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City, and his wife, Judith; Gov. Bill Owens and Lt. Gov. Jane Bergman Norton of Colorado; Marilyn Coors, wife of Colorado senatorial candidate Pete Coors; Steven E. Musgrave, husband of Representative Marilyn N. Musgrave; former Representative Bob Schaffer, senatorial candidate in Colorado; professional baseball player Todd Helton and his wife, Christy; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist network; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Council Bluffs, Iowa

October 25, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you being here. Laura and I are so honored so many came out to say hello. You're lifting our spirits.

I want to thank all the Iowans who are here. Thank you for coming. I want to thank those of you from the great State of Nebraska who took the—[*applause*]. We are here to not only ask for the vote in this part of the world; we're here to ask for your help. We're here to say that we need your help coming down the stretch. We need you to make the phone calls, find your friends and neighbors and encourage them to go to the polls. With your help, we will carry Iowa and win a great victory on November the 2d.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian, and she said—and some of you will probably be able to relate to this—she said, "Fine, I will marry you, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech."[*Laughter*] I said, "You've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she speaks the American people see a warm, strong, great First Lady.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Now, look, I fully admit he does not have the waviest hair in this race. [*Laughter*] But I want to assure you, I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment.

We had breakfast with Rudy at our ranch in Crawford. We've just come from Greeley, Colorado. We're headed to Davenport, Iowa. I tell you, it's a great joy to travel with Rudy Giuliani. I'm proud to have his support, and I'm honored to call him friend. And by the way, his wife, Judith, is traveling with us too.

So the last time I saw Senator Grassley, I turned to Laura and said, "Laura, you know the South Lawn has got a lot of grass on it, and we're looking for somebody to come and mow it." [*Laughter*] Let me tell you something about your Senator. When it came time to cut the taxes on the working people of this country, Senator Grassley led the charge in the United States Senate. When it came time to strengthen Medicare to make sure our seniors got prescription drug coverage and rural hospitals were treated fairly, Senator Grassley led the United States Senate. I know the people of Iowa are proud to call him Senator. I'm proud to call him Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Congressman Steve King from Iowa for joining us today. Congressman, you're doing a fine job. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank those of you who are putting up the signs. I want to thank those of you who are making the phone calls. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is turn out a big vote on November the 2d.

I want to thank my friend Michael W. Smith for singing for you this evening.

I want to thank all of you who are here who wear our Nation's uniform. Thank you for your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for our military. And I want to thank our military families for the sacrifices you have made.

In the last week of this campaign, I will continue to talk about my vision for a more hopeful America. I'm committed to low taxes and spending discipline. We'll talk about how to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. I'll talk about how to make sure our farm economy remains strong in America.

In the next 4 years, we'll stay on the path of reform and results in our schools, so no child is left behind in America. I'll remind people we have a plan to make sure health care is more affordable and accessible and that in all we do to reform health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made between doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC. I will remind the people that over the next 4 years, we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we'll strengthen the system for our children and our grandchildren.

I will tell the people we'll continue to promote a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. I will remind them that we'll protect family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. And I will tell the people that I'll name Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Yet, all progress we hope to make depends on the security of our Nation. We face enemies who hate our country and would do anything to harm us. We will fight these enemies with every asset of our national power. We will do our duty and protect the American people.

And that's what I want to talk to you and the good people of Iowa and Nebraska about today, our national security. In the last 4 years, we've been through a lot of history. We saw a ruthless sneak attack on the United States. We learned of heroism on doomed airplanes. We saw the bravery of rescuers rushing toward danger. We have seen our military bring freedom to the oppressed and justice to our enemy. Our Nation has shown its character to the world. We are proud to be Americans.

We are now nearing the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. People of the United States will choose the leader of the free world in the middle of a global war. The choice is not only between two candidates; it's between two directions in the conduct of the war on terror. The American voters must answer these questions: Will America return to the defensive, reactive mindset that sought to manage the dangers to our country?

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Or will we fight a real war, with the goal of victory? In every critical aspect, my opponent and I see the war on terror differently, and Americans need to consider those differences as they make a vital choice.

First, I believe that America wins wars by fighting on the offensive. When I saw all those images of fire and death on September the 11th, I made a decision: Our country will not sit back and wait for future attacks; we will prevent those attacks by going after the enemy.

And so since that day, we are waging a global campaign from the mountains of Central Asia to the deserts of the Middle East, from the Horn of Africa to the Philippines. And those efforts are succeeding. Since September the 11th, 2001, more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

After September the 11th, we set a new direction for American policy and endorsed a doctrine that is clear to all: If you support

or harbor terrorists, you're equally guilty of terrorist murder.

We destroyed the terror camps that trained thousands of killers in Afghanistan. We removed the Taliban from power. We persuaded the Governments in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to recognize the enemy and to join the fight. We ended the regime of Saddam Hussein, which sponsored terror, and we know that America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We sent a message to Libya—we sent a clear message to Libya, which has now given up its weapons of mass destruction programs. We have acted through diplomacy and force to shrink the area where the terrorists can freely operate. And our strategy has the terrorists on the run.

My opponent has a different point of view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He says that by fighting terrorists in the Middle East, America has, quote, "created terrorists where they did not exist."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. This is his argument, that terrorists are somehow less dangerous or fewer in number if America avoids provoking them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the enemy. We're dealing with killers who have made the death of Americans the calling of their lives. If America were not fighting these killers west of Baghdad and in the mountains of Afghanistan and elsewhere, what does Senator Kerry think they would do? Would they begin leading productive lives of service and charity?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Would the terrorists who behead innocent people on camera just be quiet and peaceful citizens if we had not liberated Iraq?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. We are fighting the terrorists with our military in Afghanistan and Iraq and beyond so we do not have to face them in the streets of our cities.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. America is not to blame for terrorist hatred, and no retreat by America would appease them. We don't create terrorists by fighting them; we defeat the terrorists by fighting them.

Our second difference concerns Iraq. I believe victory in Iraq is essential to victory in the war on terror. And we have had a strategy to achieve that victory. The stakes in that country are high. If a terror regime were allowed to reemerge in Iraq, terrorists would again find a home, a source of funding, and vital support. They would correctly conclude that free nations do not have the will to defend themselves. As Iraq succeeds as a free society at the heart of the Middle East, an ally in the war on terror, and a model for hopeful reform in a troubled region, the terrorists will suffer a crushing defeat and every free nation will be more secure.

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The despicable executions of unarmed Iraqi security forces show the evil nature of the terrorists we fight and prove those terrorists are enemies of the Iraqi people and the American people and the civilized world. The terrorists and insurgents hate our progress and fight our progress, but they will not stop our progress.

We will stay on the offense, and we will prevail. We will help Iraqis get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

My opponent has a different view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator calls America's mission in Iraq a "mistake," a "diversion," a "colossal error."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then says he's the right man to win the war.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You cannot win a war you do not believe in fighting.

On Iraq, my opponent has a strategy of pessimism and retreat. He has talked about artificial timetables to pull our troops out. He has sent the signal that America's overriding goal in Iraq would be to leave, even if the job is not done.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That sends the wrong message. It sends the wrong message to Iraqis, who need to know that America will never cut and run. That sends the wrong message to our troops and the troops of our coalition, who need to know that we will honor their sacrifice by completing the mission. My opponent has the wrong strategy for the wrong country at the wrong time. On this vital front of the war on terror, protest is not a policy, retreat is not a strategy, and failure is not an option. As long as I am the Commander in Chief, America will never retreat in the face of terrorism.

Third, I believe that American leadership is indispensable to winning the war on terror. Ever since September the 11th, 2001, America has sounded a certain trumpet. We have stated clearly the challenge to civilization, and we have rallied many nations to oppose it. More than 90 nations are actively engaged in the war on terror. All 26 NATO nations have personnel in either Iraq, Afghanistan, or both. NATO has taken leadership of an international force in Afghanistan, the first out-of-area deployment in the history of our Alliance. Japan has deployed forces to Iraq, the first overseas mission in the history of their democracy. Forces from South Korea are in Iraq as well. America has led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

My opponent takes a different approach. He believes that instead of leading with confidence, America must submit to what he calls a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. [*Laughter*] He was standing right about just there when I heard him say it. As far as I can tell, that means our country must get permission from foreign capitals before we act in our own self-defense.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As President, I will always work with other countries and seek their advice. But there is a world of difference between working with good allies and giving a few reluctant nations veto power over our role in the world. I will never submit our national security decisions to the veto of a foreign government.

In addition to a "global test," my opponent promises what he calls a "golden age" of diplomacy to charm critical governments all over the world.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I don't see much diplomatic skill in Senator Kerry's habit of insulting America's closest friends. He has called the countries serving alongside us in Iraq, quote, "a trumped-up coalition of the bribed, the coerced, the bought, and the extorted."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Even last week, my opponent said that we have, quote, "hardly anyone with us in Iraq."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is a deeply offensive way to treat some 30 nations that are in Iraq, especially the 14 nations that have lost forces in our cause. How can Senator Kerry denigrate the contributions of countries led by the likes of Tony Blair of Great Britain, John Howard of Australia, or Silvio Berlusconi of Italy or Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland and then expect other leaders to stand with America in the future? You cannot expand an alliance by showing contempt for those already in it. In this time of challenge to civilization, America has found strong and responsible allies. They deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician.

Fourth, I believe that America will gain long-term security by promoting freedom and hope and democracy in the broader Middle East. The job of a leader is to look ahead, and our country must look ahead. In 20 years from now, if the Middle East is dominated by dictators and mullahs who build weapons

of mass destruction and harbor terrorists, our children and grandchildren will live in a nightmare world of danger. That does not have to happen. By taking the side of reformers and democrats in the Middle East, we will gain allies in the war on terror; we'll isolate the ideology of murder; and we will help defeat the despair and hopelessness that feeds terror. By spreading freedom and liberty, the world will become a much safer place for future generations.

Progress in the broader Middle East toward freedom will not come easily. Yet, that progress is coming faster than many would have said possible. Across a troubled region, we're seeing a movement toward elections and greater rights for women and open discussions for peaceful reform. The election in Afghanistan this month and the election in Iraq next January will be counted as landmark events in the history of liberty.

My opponent looks at things differently. He is not only skeptical of—about democracy in Iraq; he's not made democracy a priority of his foreign policy. But what is his long-term answer to the threat of terror? Is he content to watch and wait as anger and resentment grow for more decades in the Middle East, feeding more terrorism until radicals without conscience gain the weapons to kill without limit? Ignoring the root causes of terror, turning a blind eye to the oppression and despair of millions may be easier in the short run. But we learned on September the 11th that if violence and fanaticism are not opposed at their source, they will find us where we live.

Instead of offering his own agenda for freedom, my opponent complains that we're trying to, quote, "impose democracy on people in the broader Middle East." Is that what he sees in Afghanistan, unwilling people having democracy forced upon them? We did remove the Taliban by force, but democracy is rising in that country because the Afghan people, like people everywhere, want to live in freedom.

No one forced them to register by the millions or to stand in long lines to vote. For many people, that historic election was a day they will never forget. One man in western Kabul arrived to vote at 7 a.m. He said, "I didn't sleep all night. I wanted to be the first in my polling station." My fellow citizens, freedom is on the march, and it's changing the world.

We are witnessing big and hopeful events. I believe that people across the world, people in the Middle East want to live in freedom. I believe this because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Our fifth great difference concerns the role of the Presidency. A President has to lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics have to change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe and where I stand and what I intend to do.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win the war on terror, and I will always support the men and women who do the fighting.

My opponent has taken a different approach.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Senator Kerry says that we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam made us less safe. He stated in our second debate that he always believed that Saddam was a threat, except, a few questions later, when he said Saddam Hussein was not a threat.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*] Now my opponent is throwing out the wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001 and that our military passed up the chance to get him in Tora Bora. This is an unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the

worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking. And that's what we've come to expect from Senator Kerry.

In fact, our commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks recently wrote this about Tora Bora: "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." The General said that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for terrorists in Tora Bora and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, Senator Kerry said this, "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said about Tora Bora, "I think we've been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." Well, all I can tell you is that I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

Yet, Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently and dangerously wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against many of the weapons systems critical to our defense buildup.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East and possess the world's most dangerous weapons. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right.

Just last year, American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan needed $87 billion for body armor and hazard pay, vehicles, weapons, and bullets. First, Senator Kerry said, "It would be irresponsible to vote against the troops." Then he voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." History has shown that Senator Kerry was right, then wrong—[*laughter*]—then briefly right, and wrong again. Since then, on the 87 billion, my opponent has said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden." He's replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them. If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

All the differences I outlined today add up to one big difference, and it's important

for our fellow citizens to understand that difference. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His top foreign policy adviser says, "The war is just like a metaphor, like the war on poverty." The Senator's goal is to go back to the mindset of the 1990s, when terrorism was seen as a nuisance and was fought with subpoenas and a few cruise missiles.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There's a major problem with that. The calm—the era of calm he longs for was only a shallow illusion of peace. We now know that throughout the 1990s, the terrorists were training and plotting against us. They saw our complacency as weakness. And so their plans became more ambitious and their attacks became more deadly until, finally, the Twin Towers became Ground Zero and the Pentagon was in flames.

My outlook was changed on September the 11th. A few days after the attacks, I stood with Rudy where buildings fell. I will never forget the evil of our enemy and the suffering of our people. I know we are fighting a war. And I remember the workers in the hardhats there at Ground Zero, yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." From that day forward, I've gotten up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

In a new term, we will finish the work we have started. We will stand against terror and stand for freedom and peace we all want. And on November the 2d, my fellow Americans, I ask you to stand with me.

God bless. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. at the Mid-America Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City, and his wife, Judith; entertainer Michael W. Smith; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist network; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Davenport, Iowa

October 25, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. It is great to be back in the great city of Davenport, Iowa. Laura and I are—[*applause*]. Thanks for coming. You've lifted our spirits today. We really appreciate you being here.

We're heading down the stretch. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to ask for your help. I need you to go to your friends and neighbors and remind them we have a duty in this great democracy to vote. Don't overlook discerning Democrats when you get people going to the polls, by the way, people like Senator Zell Miller. Remind your friends and neighbors if they want a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Laura and I were in the seventh grade together in San Jacinto Junior High, in Midland, Texas, and then we became reacquainted. She was a public school librarian when I met her again. I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine, if you make me one promise." I said, "What is it?" "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a strong, compassionate First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. You know, I'm looking around, and I can see a few folks out there have got the same hairstyle he does. [*Laughter*] I did not pick the Vice President because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] And I admit, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

How about Rudy? We love traveling with Rudy. Rudy is a great American. We woke up, and we had breakfast with Rudy and Judith at our place in Crawford. Then we went

to Greeley, Colorado. Then we went to the western part of your State, and we're finishing a great day here in Davenport. And I want to thank Rudy—I want to thank him for joining me. I appreciate his support.

So I was telling Laura, I said, "You know something, the South Lawn at the White House has got a lot of grass on it, and we need somebody to come and mow it." [*Laughter*] "I can't think of anybody better than the Chairman, Chuck Grassley, to be mowing our lawn." What a good man Chuck Grassley is. He's a great United States Senator. I know you're proud of him.

And I'm proud of your Congressman, Jim Nussle, the budget chairman. He's watching your money like a hawk—eye. He's a good man. And I know you're proud of a Congressman who was raised right here, former Congressman. He moved up the road a little bit, but a man we call friend, and that's Congressman Jim Leach, and his wife, Deb, is here.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls, the people organizing a rally just like this one. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do. With your hard work, with your help, we will carry Iowa and win a great victory on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have just 8 days to go in this campaign, and voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and different records. You know where I stand, and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I'm proudly running on mine. The Senator is running from his. [*Laughter*] And there's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. In a time when our country has much to accomplish and much to offer, I proudly offer my record of reform and results.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our country's future.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All our progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike any we have faced before. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous, and they're determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for our homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our army. There will be no draft. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army. We are determined. We are relentless. We are staying on the offensive, and we're succeeding. The 9/11 Commission report said, "America is safer, not yet safe." More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. The rest of them know we're on their trail.

The American President, in these times of danger, must lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe and where I stand and what I intend to do. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win the war on terror, and I will always support the men and women who wear the uniform.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. My opponent has taken a different approach. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point.

[*Laughter*] Senator Kerry says we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam has made us less safe. He stated in our second debate that he always believed Saddam was a threat, except a few questions later, when he said Saddam Hussein was not a threat. [*Laughter*] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*]

Now my opponent is throwing out the wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001, and that our military passed up the chance to get him in Tora Bora. This is unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking. And it's what we've come to expect from my opponent during this campaign.

In fact, our Commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, recently wrote about Tora Bora, and he said, "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." The General said that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists in Tora Bora, and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, he said this about Tora Bora, "I think we've been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said about Tora Bora, "I think we've been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." End quote. All I can say about that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against many weapons systems critical to our defense buildup. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East and possess the world's most dangerous weapons. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and former President George Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. [*Laughter*] History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got be fair—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

Just last year, American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan needed $87 billion for important funding to help them complete their missions. First, my opponent said, "It would be irresponsible to vote against the troops." Then he voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign. They asked him about his vote, and he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." History has shown that Senator Kerry was right, then wrong—[*laughter*]—then briefly right—[*laughter*]—then wrong again. [*Laughter*] Since then, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen a position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and

John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden." And he's replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run." Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. And today I want to speak to every one of them. If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The second clear choice in this election concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families, and I kept my word. I enjoyed working with Chairman Chuck Grassley to keep a pledge I made. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code should encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent, so working families could keep more of their paychecks. We reduced taxes for everybody who pays taxes. After-tax income is up—that's money in your pocket to spend—it's up by about 10 percent since I became your President.

I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. Six months prior to our arrival in Washington, DC, the stock market was in serious decline. And then we faced the recession and corporate scandals and the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, which cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after that fateful day.

But our economic policies have put us back on the road to growth. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Our farmers are making a good living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are flourishing all across our country. We've added more than 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in the great State of Iowa is 4.7 percent. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has very different plans for your budget—for your family's budget, and that's to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You tell your friends and neighbors, he voted against the child credit, marriage penalty relief, lower tax rates. If his vote had prevailed, an average middle-class family would be paying $2,000 more a year to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's part of a pattern. He's been in the United States Senate for 20 years, and he's voted for tax increases 98 times. That's about five times every year. That's predictable. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] During his campaign, he's made a lot of big promises—big spending promises too. He's promised $2.2 trillion of new spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? When you run up the top two brackets, one, he's taxing a lot of small businesses. Seventy percent of job—new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Most small businesses pay individual income-tax rates. And when you're running up the taxes, you're taxing the job creators, and that is bad economic policy. When you raise the top two brackets, you raise between 600 billion and 800 billion dollars. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion. There is a gap. And guess who usually pays that gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. You do. The good news is, we're going to carry Iowa. We're going to win on November the 2d, and he's not going to tax you.

The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in every school in America, and I kept my word. We passed good reforms. The No

Child Left Behind Act has raised standards. It believes in local control of schools. Schools are now more accountable. Our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. We're closing achievement gaps all across this country for minority students. We'll build on these reforms. We'll extend high standards to our high schools, so that no child is left behind in America.

And we'll continue to improve lives for our families by making health care more affordable and accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts so more small businesses can cover their workers, and more families are able to get health care accounts they can manage and call their own. We will help our small businesses afford health insurance by allowing them to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will expand community health centers and rural health centers to help the poor and the indigent. We'll make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program.

And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we will do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine. I've met too many ob-gyns around this Nation that are having trouble practicing medicine because the lawsuits are running up their premiums and driving them out of business. I've met too many pregnant women who are worried about the quality of the health care they're receiving because their ob-gyn can't practice in the local community. This is a national problem that requires a national solution. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors, and I'm standing with the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

My opponent has a different point of view when it comes to schools and health care. He voted for the No Child Left Behind Act but now wants to weaken the accountability standards. For example, he's proposed including measures like teacher attendance to judge whether a student can read or write or add and subtract. We need to keep high standards in our schools. We've got to expect the best for the children. And he voted against health savings accounts. He opposes association health plans. He voted 10 times against medical liability reform. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

No, he's laid out a plan for health care, and it would be a big-Government health care plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage under his proposal would be enrolled in a Government program. Now, listen, I remember those debates when he looked right in the camera with a straight face and said, "The Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with it. It's a plan that will lead us down the road to Federal control of health care. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. I want you to remember the history on Medicare. Leaders in both political parties have talked about strengthening and modernizing Medicare for years. We got the job done. And I want to thank Chairman Chuck Grassley for his hard work on this issue. Seniors are getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 of help this year and $600 of help next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Here we have another difference in this campaign. My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage, even though it was supported by AARP and other seniors groups. In this campaign, he said, "If I'm President, we're going to repeal that phony bill." Then he went on to say, "No, I don't want to repeal it." [*Laughter*] Sounds familiar. [*Laughter*] As

your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we have worked so hard to pass and keep the promise of Medicare for America's seniors. And I will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we will strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

Now, I want to remind you all what took place in the 2000 election and may be taking place in this election already, and that is that every—every campaign cycle it seems like somebody is trying to scare our seniors. See, in 2000, they said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." As you're out rounding up the votes, I want you to remind people, George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. And I plan on getting reelected, and our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not a retirement system—a viable retirement system in Social Security will be there when they need it. And that's why I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own payroll taxes and put it in a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return, an account they own, an account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He said he talks about protecting Social Security, but he's the only candidate in this race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He might not want us to remind him of that. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And when it comes to a younger generation, he offered nothing, no reforms. The job of the President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I will bring Republicans and Democrats together to make sure Social Security is viable for a younger generation of Americans.

And the fifth and final clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping America's families strong. And here, my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment. Marriage is a pillar of civilization, and I will defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and the bill was signed by my predecessor.

But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on the difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats, many citizens on both sides of the life issue came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I proudly signed that bill.

Senator Kerry was part of the out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He also voted against parental notification laws. He voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent has said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know. Most American families do not look to Hollywood for a source of values. [*Laughter*] The heart and soul of America is found in caring and loving communities like Davenport, Iowa.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education for our families, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. And the decision is in the best of hands; it's in the hands of the American people.

I see a great day coming for America. One of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is

the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone." My opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that has gone. I'm talking about the day that's coming.

You know, we have been through a lot together over the past years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we can see the valley below. We'll protect our families. We'll build on their prosperity. We'll defend our Nation's deepest values. We'll spread freedom in the world, and as we do, we'll achieve the peace we all long for.

When I traveled your State in 2000, asking for the vote, first in the caucuses and then in the general election, I made this pledge: I pledged that I would uphold the honor and the integrity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at the RiverCenter. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City, and his wife, Judith; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command. He also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in Onalaska, Wisconsin

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all. What a great way to spend a Tuesday, and that's to be on a bus traveling throughout the great State of Wisconsin. Thank you all for coming out to say hello. It's such an honor to be here. Laura and I are—our spirits are lifted up because so many have come out to say hello. We're honored you are here. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to ask for your help. There's no doubt in my mind, if we turn out our vote in Wisconsin, we'll win a great victory on November the 2d.

I don't know if you know the history of me and Laura. We were in the seventh grade together in San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas, and then we became reacquainted years later when she was a public school librarian. And I asked her to marry me—I'm sure some of you can relate to this. She said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" "Well, promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does the American people see a warm, compassionate, great First Lady. I have been traveling your State a lot, talking about the reasons why I think people ought to put me back into office. But perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I am proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. In all due respect to those who are here who are follically challenged—[*laughter*]—I readily concede my runningmate does not have the waviest hair in the race. You'll be pleased to know I did not pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience and his judgment and his ability to get the job done.

And I'm proud of your friend Tommy Thompson. He has done a great job. I gave him one of the toughest jobs in Washington, DC, and he has responded. He has done a fabulous job to help those who hurt. Just take the issue of Medicare. Tommy and I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. That's our job, to tackle the tough problems. Medicare was a problem. See, Medicare hadn't changed, but medicine had. For example, they pay nearly $100,000 for heart surgery, but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Tommy recognized that wasn't fair. I recognized it wasn't fair. We brought Republicans and Democrats together. We did what other Presidents and other Secretaries couldn't do: We modernized Medicare, and starting in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage.

Let me say one other thing to our seniors here in Wisconsin. You might remember the 2000 campaign, when they ran those ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors

are not going to get their Social Security checks." Remember those? Yes. Well, I want you—as you're gathering up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors that George W. did get elected and our seniors did get their Social Security check. And our seniors will continue to get their Social Security checks. But we're also going to strengthen Social Security for our younger generation. Our youngsters ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

I want to thank Congressman Mark Green, who is with us today. Congressman, I appreciate you coming. He's a fine, good, young Member of the House of Representatives. I want to thank the mayor of Onalaska with us today. Mr. Mayor, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud to be standing with the next United States Senator from Wisconsin, Tim Michels. He married a lady named Barbara. [*Laughter*] I know some Barbaras. [*Laughter*] One of them is still telling me what to do. [*Laughter*] And I'm still listening, I want you to know.

I'm very impressed by a candidate for Wisconsin's Third Congressional District, a man I hope you support, the next Congressman, Dale Schultz.

I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are putting up the signs, making the phone calls, the people who helped turn out such a huge crowd here. I'm honored to have your support. Now is the time to keep the work up. Now is the time to find every single voter and tell them we have a duty, a duty in this country to vote. When you get them headed to the polls, remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're only one week away from the vote, and I'm focusing on the big issues that are facing our country's families. This election comes down to five clear choices for our families: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our country's future.

First and foremost, I've talked about the quality retirement. When I'm talking about Medicare and making sure it exists and strong, that helps our families. When I'm talking about Social Security and making sure it's around today as well as around tomorrow, that helps our families.

But the first, biggest concern of any President is your security. Our Nation is at war against a terrorist enemy unlike any we have faced before. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. We will be relentless, determined, steadfast, and strong. We will not relent. We will stay on the offensive until the fight is won.

Another big issue, of course, is our economy. It affects the quality of life. It affects your budget. It affects how much money you have in your wallet. We will expand and strengthen our economic recovery to make sure opportunity spreads throughout every corner of this country. This campaign offers a clear choice when it comes to the economy and our vision for how to create jobs. My policies support and strengthen the small businesses, which are creating most new jobs in America.

I'm going to spend a little time talking about the vision of enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit. My opponent promises to raise your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And unfortunately for our small-business owners, that's a promise most politicians tend to keep. [*Laughter*]

Our economy has been through a lot. When you're out there rounding up the vote, I want you to remind people that 6 months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline. Our economy was declining in the last half of the year 2000. We fell into a recession. We had corporate scandals which affected our economy. By the way, we passed tough laws. We have made it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We were attacked. And those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. But, see, I understand something. I understand the engine of

growth that this economy has found with the entrepreneurs and workers of America. And that's why we passed the largest tax relief in a generation, tax relief which encouraged consumption and investment.

And it's working. The economic stimulus plan we passed is working. This country created about 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is down to 5.4 percent. And let me remind you of where that stands: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is down to 5 percent. That is down almost a full point since the summer of 2003. We're headed in the right direction in America.

Our farmers are doing well. Farm income is up, and that's good for our economy. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We're on the move. We're going forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

This is a time of fantastic opportunity. The job of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish, in which people are willing to work hard to realize their dreams. Government doesn't create wealth. Government creates the environment that says, "Take a risk. Start a business if you choose to. Own something."

Today Joan Shelley is with us. I want you to hear her story. Joan is right there. First of all, she is a mom. She and her husband have got eight children. Listen to her story. She didn't think she was spending enough time—she worked as a nurse—didn't spend enough time at home. First of all, she's got her priorities straight. If you are fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, your most important responsibility is to love your child with all your heart and all your soul.

So guess what happened? Six years ago, she decided to start an online business selling cabinet hardware from the basement of her home. How many times have you heard that story? You know, "I sat around the kitchen table and came up with an idea and started a business." "I started a business in my garage." She started hers in her basement. Today, KnobGallery employs 20 people, most of them moms who wanted more flexibility for their families. This administration believes in flex-time. The world has changed. Our labor laws ought to change with them. Moms and dads ought to be able to have the flex-time in the workplace so they can balance family and the need to work.

KnobGallery is a thriving, $1.4 million business. Her family is working in the business: Kristina, it turns out, designs the company's web page. Joan is living the American Dream. She has started her own business. She owns her own company. And she—I said, "Are you going to increase the jobs?" She said, "I'm intending to add more people to work." See, the more Joans that start up their own business, the more likely that somebody is going to find a job in America. The role of the Government is to create an environment for the Joan Shelleys to feel comfortable in starting and expanding their business.

Ric Hartman is with us. There he is. Hi, Ric. He managed at one time the in-house design shop of a large packaging firm for 15 years. Last October, about a year ago, he learned the company was going to close his operation. So guess what he did? He got some of those people he worked with, put them in a van, went to a local flour mill and said, "This is where we're going to start our new company." See, the entrepreneurial spirit must be strong if America is going to be a hopeful place. Five came with him. Today, he runs a profitable small business called Hartman Design. Here's what he said: "Deep down, I think every design person wants to run their own shop." Deep down, a lot of people in America want to run their own shop. Deep down, people have a desire to start their own business, and when they do, somebody is more likely to find a job.

A hopeful America and one that's good for your budget is one in which small businesses are thriving, in which people from all walks of life feel comfortable about starting their own business. Do you realize minority businesses are up in America? That is hopeful and positive for the future of this country. Seven out of ten new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And there is a source of upward mobility in America that comes with ownership. When a woman owns her own business, she's upwardly mobile. When a Latino or an African American starts his or her own business, they become

upwardly mobile. Ownership is a powerful part of the American Dream.

And so the fundamental question in this campaign, who's got the best strategy to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong? Who's got the idea, who understands, and who can best make sure that more small businesses grow in America? First, in order to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want businesses to start, this must be the best place in the world to do business. And secondly, to make sure this is a hopeful world, we've got to make sure the workforce is the best trained in the world. A lot of good jobs and a lot of good hopes start with good education.

First, let me talk about how to make sure this is the best place in the world to do business. One, we've got to keep your taxes low. We passed good tax relief. We raised the child credit. That helps if you're a mom or a dad. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe strongly the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We created a 10 percent bracket. That helps the working families. But we also said, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." If you're going to have tax relief, everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief. That's only fair.

But guess what happens? What most Americans don't know, and evidently what my opponent doesn't know, is that most small businesses are either a Subchapter S corporation like the two small businesses I just mentioned or sole proprietorships, which means you pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Ninety percent of businesses in America pay individual income taxes, which says when you cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes, you're helping the small businesses. See, there is a connection between good tax relief and growth in the small-business sector.

And so to encourage small-business investment, not only did we say, "You can have more money in your coffers so you can expand your business or pay more money or better afford health care," but we encouraged investment by increasing the small-business expensing deduction from $25,000 to $100,000. See, I understand if you create the demand for goods and services and provide incentives for investment, the economy grows. That's what you've got to understand. It's a difference of opinion. It's a difference of philosophy. My opponent believes the economy grows by growing the size of the Federal Government. I believe the economy grows by growing the size of the coffers of small businesses.

Here's what Paul Schoeneck of New Berlin, Wisconsin, said. See, his business, like the other two, were Subchapter S corporations. He said about tax relief, "We have doubled our workforce. We've increased pay. We have consistently paid out bonuses. We've significantly increased our gross and net income. We've increased our production lines by nine, remodeled our offices, and significantly improved our infrastructure." That's what he said. Those aren't my words. That is what a small-business owner from Wisconsin has said about the tax relief. He said, "Without tax relief, this would not have been possible."

I want you, when you hear these people talking about tax relief, about how it only benefited certain people—this tax relief has helped our small businesses grow and prosper, and this economy is on the move because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong.

And taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who's promised $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's with a "T." That is—that's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." That means raise the top two brackets. By raising the top two brackets, he's taxing the small-business sector of America. That's bad economic policy. Just as the economy is beginning to grow, just as the small businesses are feeling confident—I talked to the two small-business owners here. I said, "Are you going to hire somebody?" They said, "We're thinking about hiring new people." But running up the taxes on them would make it less likely they'd hire somebody. It's bad economic policy to tax the small-business owners of America, which is precisely what my opponent's plan would do.

See, when you say you're going to run up the top two brackets, you raise about $600 billion, maybe 800 billion, depending on whose accountant you use. [*Laughter*] But

the point is, in either case you're far short of the $2.2 trillion that he has promised. There is a gap. There is a gap between what he's promised and what he can deliver. And guess who usually gets to fill the gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. Yes, you do. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win on November the 2d.

The bottom line about our economic visions is this: To pay for all his new spending he's proposed, my opponent will have to raise taxes not just on small-business owners but on everyone who's ever worked for a small business, shopped at a small business, or walked by a small business. [*Laughter*] We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to win.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. To make sure that this economy is strong and the small businesses can flourish, we've got to do something about the frivolous and junk lawsuits. These kind of lawsuits cost our economy about $230 billion a year. This amounts to about $3,000 a year for the average family. They're expensive, and they're really expensive on small businesses. If part of the vision is to make sure the small-business sector of our economy flourishes, we've got to do something about the liability. The average cost of tort liability for a small business is about $150,000. That's money that could be better used for employees, worker training, health care, expanding the business, creating new jobs.

My opponent and I have a different approach. He's sided with the personal-injury trial lawyers time and time again. They're powerful in Washington, make no mistake about it. It's hard to get good legal reform out of the United States Senate because they're influential. As a matter of fact, he's raised more money from lawyers than any other Member of the United States Senate. That's about $22 million so far since 1989, and still counting. And there's a reason why. He's voted five times against protecting small businesses on punitive damages. He's made it clear where he stands. He's made it abundantly clear. He's put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I'm going to stand with our small-business owners and continue to be for legal reforms in Washington, DC.

We need less regulations on our small businesses. We need reasonable regulations. I can't guarantee that anybody in Washington has ever read the forms small businesses have to fill out. I wish I could say they have; I doubt it. But one way to make sure we reduce the burden on our—not only our small businesses but our—the working people here in America is to reform the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. It is too complex. I'm going to bring people together. Listen, I recognize the—first of all, the code is a million pages long. American workers and small-business owners and families spend 6 billion hours a year filling out the forms. We can do a better job. We can make this Tax Code pro-growth, pro-family, and fair. And I will bring Republicans * and Democrats together to do so.

A couple of other quick points on how to make sure the environment is good for business growth so that you've got more money, so that you can manage your budget better, so that people can find a job. We need—Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that makes sense. It's common sense. It encourages conservation. It encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It uses technologies to help us burn coal more cleanly. It encourages exploration for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. To make sure that this environment for growth is strong, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Let me talk right quick about education, because I believe a good economy requires this workforce of ours to be educated. I think the two go hand in hand. I don't think you can have a hopeful environment for growth if our people aren't educated. It all starts with the younger kids. That's why I went to Washington, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know, this business about just shuffling the children through, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics was not good enough for America, as far as I'm concerned. I believe every child

* White House correction.

can learn, and I believe every school must teach. And so we increased funding, particularly for Title I students. But we said, "In return for extra funding, show us whether or not a child can read and write and add and subtract."

See, I understand you can't solve a problem until you diagnose a problem. You can't fix a problem until you fully understand the nature of the problem. By measuring, we now know where the problems exist in America, and we're providing the extra money to solve them. And guess what's happening? Kids are learning to read and write and add and subtract. Because we're measuring, we now know the benchmarks. We're seeing progress. We're closing the achievement gap amongst minority students in America. And we're not going to go back to the old days of mediocrity and low standards.

I think one of the country's greatest assets is the community college system. Community colleges are able to adjust their curriculum to meet the needs of the job providers. I've met small businesses who have told me about helping set up a curriculum in our community colleges so our workers can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You just heard about Joan's company, where in her basement, she started a company over the Internet. In other words, we need new skill sets as this economy of ours changes. And a great place for America's workers to gain new skill sets is in the community college system all across our country.

Most of the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. That's why I believe small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discount that big companies are able to do.

We'll expand health savings accounts to help our families and small businesses to be able to better afford health insurance and, at the same time, provide a health account that you can own and you can manage, you can take with you from job to job. And we'll make sure we do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. This is a national issue. I have met too many ob-gyns who are being driven out of practice because the lawsuits are running up their cost of doing business, their premiums. And I've met too many patients of ob-gyns who are having to drive for miles, wondering whether or not they and their child will get the health care they need.

Medical liability is a crisis in America, and it's a crisis because we can't get anything done in the United States Senate because the trial bar is too strong. My opponent has voted against medical liability reform not once, not twice but 10 times. In a new term, I'm going to bring people together and say, "The people have spoke. We need medical liability reform now to make sure health care is affordable and available."

We have a big difference when it comes to health care in this campaign. And it is a big difference. I remember that debate when my opponent stood up there with a straight face and he said, "The Government has nothing to do with it,"—"it" being his health care plan. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with it—a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people would end up on the Government health care. Think about this: When you run up the Medicaid, make Medicaid more eligible for people, it's going to provide an incentive for small businesses to not provide insurance for their employees because the Government will. That doesn't make any sense, to be moving people from private insurance to the Government. When the Government writes the check, the Government starts setting the rules, and you don't want the Federal Government making the rules when it comes to your health care.

I've come here to Wisconsin to tell the people I understand how this economy works, and my policies are standing square with the workers, the families, and the small-business owners of America. I also want to tell you in changing times, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support and must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the

appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent takes a different approach. His words on these issues are a little murky, but his record is really clear. [*Laughter*] He says he supports the institution of marriage but voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which overwhelmingly passed with Democrat and Republican votes. My predecessor signed that bill into law, which defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and my opponent voted against it. He says—you know, he says he's got a personal view on the issue of life, but he voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's called the Reagan years a time of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. My fellow Americans, he can run from his views, but he cannot hide.

All the progress we hope for in America and all the prosperity and opportunity we want for every family and for our children ultimately depends on the security of our Nation. We're in the middle of a global war on terror. We face a determined enemy. In the war on terror, there's no place for confusion, no place for weakness, no substitute for victory. I believe if America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We're on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're promoting democracy and liberty, the great alternatives to despair and terror. I want you to tell your children about what took place in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls lived under the reign of the Taliban, a brutal, barbaric people. They would not let young girls go to school, and if their mothers didn't toe their ideological line, they were taken in the public square sometimes and whipped. These people were dark and dim. There was darkness in Afghanistan. Because we defended ourselves, because we believe in freedom, the Afghanistan people went by the millions to the polls to vote for their President. The first voter—the first voter—was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq will have a Presidential election. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march. Freedom is on the move, and our country is better for it.

A President must lead with consistency and strength in these troubling times. In war, sometimes you change your tactics, but you never change your principles. And Americans have seen how I do my job. [*Applause*] Thank you. Even when you might not agree with me, you know where I stand, what I believe, and what I intend to do. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win this war on terror, and I will always support the men and women of the United States military.

My opponent has taken a different approach. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry says we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declared that removing Saddam made us less safe. He stated in our second debate that he always believed that Saddam was a threat except, a few questions later, when he said Saddam Hussein was not a threat. [*Laughter*] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*]

And now he's throwing out a wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001, and that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. It is unjustified criticism of the military commanders

in the field. It is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking. Our commander in Afghanistan at the time was General Tommy Franks, and he wrote this about Tora Bora, he said, "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." [*Laughter*] That's what the man who was there said. He says the American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists in Tora Bora, and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in one of several countries. They didn't know whether he was here, there, or otherwise. In other words, they didn't have hard intelligence. Maybe my opponent has seen something we all haven't seen.

As a matter of fact, Senator Kerry, before he got into political difficulty and revised his views, he said this about Tora Bora on national TV, in the fall of 2001, he said, "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said about Tora Bora, "I think we have been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." All I can say about that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

My opponent's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait, even though the United Nations had passed a resolution and there was a strong coalition and agreement with U.S. policy. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, my opponent proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong—we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

The President must be consistent and strong in these difficult times. Just last year, when American troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed $87 billion of increased funding to support our troops in harm's way. It was important funding. Bipartisan support for that funding was very strong. As you round up the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors of this startling statistic: Only 4 members of the United States Senate—4 out of 100—voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way, and 2 of those 4 were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember, when they asked him about the vote, he said this, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." History has shown that Senator Kerry was right, then wrong, then briefly right, then wrong again. [*Laughter*] They finally kept pressing him. He said the whole thing about the $87 billion was a complicated matter. My friends, there is nothing complicated about supporting our men and women in combat.

And speaking about those men and women, we have got a fantastic military and I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. And I want to thank the military families who are here today for your sacrifice. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen a position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden." He's replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run." Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore, and today I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe

America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence and resolve, I'd be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

Our differences on keeping the security of the country and protecting our families are vast. My opponent says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. Well, my outlook was changed on September the 11th. I'll never forget going to the Ground Zero on September the 14th, 2001. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I'll never forget the sights and sounds. I'll never forget the person looking me straight in the eye and saying, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made a pledge that if I was elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 a.m. at the Onalaska Omni Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James Bialecki of Onalaska, WI; Kristina Shelley, daughter of KnobGallery owner Joan Shelley; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in a Discussion in Richland Center, Wisconsin

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Laura and I are—we're glad you came, and we are glad we came. I'm here to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office. I'm here to talk about issues that matter to our future. We're going to have—we're going to do it a little interesting way today. I've asked some of your fellow citizens to come up and talk about how our policies have affected their lives. And this will perhaps give people a clear view of why I have made some of the decisions I have made.

Perhaps the most important reason why people ought to put me back into office is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm going to take my jacket off. Okay. Some of you all may relate to this. When I asked her to marry me—actually, we had gone—I don't know if you know this or not, but we were in seventh grade together in San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. We became reacquainted—are you from Midland?

Audience member. Lubbock.

The President. Lubbock, Texas, 150 miles south of Midland. Anyway, thank you, welcome.

When we became reacquainted, she was a public school librarian. It's fitting we're in a school here, by the way. We want to thank the teachers who work in this school to help every child realize their dreams. Thank you.

She said, "Fine, I will marry you"—this is after I asked her, of course—"only if you make me one promise." I said, "What is the promise?" "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I, of course, said, "Okay, you've got a deal." She didn't hold me to the promise, thankfully. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a warm and compassionate and great First Lady.

I want to thank our friend Tommy Thompson. I want to thank him for his service to our country, and I want to thank him for his friendship. Tommy has done a great job in Washington. You trained him well. [*Laughter*] He was a wonderful Governor of Wisconsin; I knew that when I was looking for a Cabinet Secretary. I gave him a tough assignment, and he's handled it brilliantly. And I want to thank you, Tommy, for your service. Appreciate you.

You know, Tommy and I went to Washington to get some things done, and one of the things we had to do was to make sure our seniors had quality health care. Medicine

was changing; Medicare was not. For example, the Government would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery under Medicare but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. And Tommy and I understood that didn't make any sense for our seniors and it didn't make any sense for the taxpayers, so we worked together with both Republicans and Democrats to strengthen Medicare, to keep the promise to our seniors. And beginning in the year 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare. I think it's important for you to know that when I say something, I mean it, and I'm going to get the job done.

I want to thank thank Congressman Mark Green. I appreciate you coming, Congressman, a fine young Congressman from Wisconsin. He's not from this part of the world, but you'll get to know him, and when you do, you'll like him. He's a good, honest man.

I want to thank Jack Voight for being here, the State treasurer of the great State of Wisconsin. Jack, thank you, sir. Good to see you again. And I want to thank the mayor. Madam Mayor, thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you being here. It means a lot.

I want to thank U.S. Senate candidate Tim Michels and his wife, Barbara. You need to put him in the Senate. He's a good man. He's got good values. He'll make you a fine United States Senator. And I'm going to tell you who's going to make you a fine United States Congressman, and that would be Dale Schultz. Appreciate you—Schultz. He's working. He's shaking a lot of hands. He's putting up a lot of signs. I know firsthand. See, I'm taking the bus throughout this part of the world. [*Laughter*] And I've seen a lot of the signs, and that's a good sign. And I also want to thank Rachel—Rachel Schultz, who happens to be the district superintendent of the schools. And I want to thank you for your—being in education. I want to thank John Cler and all the folks associated with the high school for letting us come here today. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank the students. Thanks for coming, letting me come. All right. Study more than you watch TV. [*Laughter*] And if you're 18, make sure you vote.

See, that's what I'm here to do. I'm here to ask people for the vote and for their help. We have a duty in this country to vote. We have a duty in democracy to go to the polls. People need to exercise their right in a free society. And I'm asking you for your help to get people to go to the polls. I know you've done a lot of work in this part of the world. I've seen a lot of signs for me, too, and I appreciate it. But those signs are important, but they don't pull the lever. And so coming down the stretch, I'm here to ask for your help in turning out the vote. And there's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry the State of Wisconsin.

We've really enjoyed our bus trips through Wisconsin. Today we stopped off and saw John and Connie Turgasen.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Evidently you've heard of them. That's good. [*Laughter*] Well, I wonder if they'd reconsider when they saw four buses pull up in their front yard. [*Laughter*] But they're dairy farmers. There were four generations of Turgasens right there, making a living off that one farm. It reminds me about how important it is to support our small businesses, our farmers, our ranchers. When you're getting people to go to the polls, remind them of this, that under the Bush administration, the farmers are doing just fine. The income is up, and people are making a living. And that's good for people all across this part of the world. We enjoyed going to that farm, and we enjoyed meeting that great Wisconsin family.

You know, we've overcome a lot in this country. I pledged to make this country a more hopeful place, and that means hopeful for everybody. But we've had to overcome a lot in order to make it more hopeful. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people about what this economy has been through. You know, a hopeful country is one in which people can make a living, people can stay on the farm, people who say to me, "Mr. President, we've been able to support four generations of Turgasens on this farm."

But we've been through a lot in this economy. You know, the stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in

Washington, DC. And then we had a recession. And then we had some corporate scandals, and that affected our economy. It's now abundantly clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We expect people to be responsible citizens in this country. And we got attacked. And that attack of September the 11th cost us nearly a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack. We've had some obstacles put in our path.

But we acted. I understand that when somebody's got more money in their pocket, they're likely to demand an additional good or a service. And when you demand an additional good or a service in our marketplace, somebody is going to produce it. When somebody produces it, somebody is likely to find a job. The tax relief we passed is working. The tax relief we passed has got this economy growing again.

And the facts are clear. We've added 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. We're growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Our farmers are doing well. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. The unemployment rate nationally is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in the State of Wisconsin is 5 percent. We're moving forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend. That's not an economic policy; that's a way to get in your wallet and grow the size of the Federal Government.

So there's more to do. It's one thing to talk about a record, but the only reason to look back is to be able to say to people, "Here's what we're going to do as we move forward." The job of the President is to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, the environment for small-business creation is good, that people have a chance to make a living.

So what does it take? One, it means we've got to keep your taxes low. I'm about to talk to some small-business owners here who know what it means to pay high taxes and what it means to have their taxes lowered. But taxes are an issue in this campaign. As you travel in your district and travel talking to people, remind people that taxes are an issue. The fellow I'm running against has proposed $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot. Even for a Senator from Massachusetts, that's a lot.

And so they said—and you know the legitimate question is, "Fine, you made all these promises; how are you going to pay for them?" And he threw out that same old line we've heard almost every campaign: "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." Now, we've heard that before. Let me tell you the two things wrong with that.

One is that when you tax the rich—in other words, when you're running up the top two income brackets—you're going to tax small-business owners. Many small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax rate because they're called Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. Those are fancy legal and accounting words which mean they pay income tax at the individual rate. That's just the truth. About 90 percent of all small business pay individual income taxes. So when you hear somebody say, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich," I want you thinking about the truth. And the truth is they're talking about taxing about 900,000 to a million small businesses. You know what the problem with that is? Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses in America. It makes no sense to be taxing the job creators.

And here is the other thing wrong with it. If you promise 2.2 trillion, but your tax plan only raises between 600 and 800 billion, there is a gap between what is promised and what can be delivered. Now, there is a—my opponent has a history; it's a record. I like to tell people I'm running on my record. He's not running on his; he's running from his record. And part of his record—in his 20 years as Senator, part of his record is he's voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's a record; that's what he's done. I'm not making it up. That's five times every year he's been in the Senate. That's a predictable pattern. And so when you're trying to find out who's going to fill the tax gap, think about predictable patterns. In order to fill that gap, in order to make the difference between what he's promised and what he can deliver, guess who's going to get stuck with the bill? Yes, that's always what happens.

We're not going to let him tax you; we're not going to let him tax the small businesses, because we're going to carry Wisconsin and win on November the 2d.

A couple of other things that I want to talk to you right quick about to make sure this economy continues to grow. First, we will continue with good farm policy. I'm for the MILC program—MILC, which is helping our dairy farmers. I'm for the reauthorization of that. Ask your dairy farmers whether that means something to them, and you're going to find out it does.

We'll continue to open up markets, opening up markets for agriculture products and manufacturing products and high-tech products. They're good for the job creation and the job creators. Listen, we've opened up our market for goods from overseas, and that's good for you as a consumer. Think about how the market works. If you have more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the market works. So instead of shutting down our market when it comes to trade and hurting our consumers, our strategy is to say to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you," is to open up markets, is to demand that others are fair to us. And the reason why I do that is because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

If you want jobs to stay here, we've got to do something about the energy situation. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago that encourages conservation, that encourages the use of ethanol and biodiesel. Think about the idea of being able to say as the President, "The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent." Think about that, that someday it's going to happen. We're going to continue to spend research and development dollars so we can grow our way toward less reliance.

We're promoting clean coal technology so that your powerplants can have power. We're going to modernize the electricity grid. We're going to explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. What I'm telling you is this: In order to make sure that jobs continue to grow, that people can make a living, this country must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We're going to talk to a small-business manufacturer here. He told me he's had a problem with health care. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. Most of the uninsured in America work for small businesses. So here's some commonsense ways to help you on health care.

Small businesses ought to be able to pool together, pool risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies get to do. You know, there needs to be economies of purchase in the marketplace. If you're a stand-alone small business, it costs you a lot of money to afford health care. If you're able to pool across jurisdictional boundaries, if you get more people to spread the risk, you're able to get insurance at better prices for your workers. That's a commonsense way of helping small businesses.

We'll expand health savings accounts, which are commonsense ways of enabling people to be able to manage their own health care account, low-premium, high-deductible accounts where you can save tax-free. It will help your families. If you change jobs, you can take your health account with you from year to year. If you save money, you can roll over your savings in your health account tax-free. It's a way to make sure the decision-making is between you and your doctor, not between some insurance person and your doctor. The more you're able to have—the more you're involved with your health care decisions, the more likely it is there's a cost discipline in the marketplace.

Listen, we'll take care of the needy. We have an obligation in our society to do so. I'm a big believer in community health centers, places where the poor and the indigent can get good primary and preventative care. My pledge, I said in the convention speech and I'm saying all over the country, is that in a new term, we'll make sure every poor county in America has got a community health center to take the pressure off our emergency rooms and our hospitals.

But let me tell you another practical way to make sure health care is available and affordable. We must do something about the litigious nature of our society. There's too many lawsuits. Lawsuits are running up the cost of doing business. Lawsuits are running good doctors out of practice. Lawsuits are

hurting people who need health care. I have met too many ob-gyns around this country that are having to leave their practice because these lawsuits are running up their premiums. They cannot afford to practice medicine. I've met too many women who are deeply concerned about their health care and the health of their child because their local doctor no longer practices. And that's not right for America.

If we're interested in our quality of life, we'd better do something about all these lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose in life. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket. I have made my choice. I am standing with the Wisconsin docs and patients and small-business owners. I am for medical liability reform—now.

We have a difference of opinion when it comes to health care. I remember the debate when my opponent—they asked him about his health care plan, and he actually looked in the camera and said, "The Government has nothing to do with it." You know, I could barely contain myself when he said that. [*Laughter*]

The Government has a lot to do with his plan, and that's what I want you to understand. His plan is one—for example, when you run up Medicaid, run up the eligibility for Medicaid, it provides an incentive for small businesses to not provide insurance for their employees because the Government will. It's estimated some 8 million people will go from private insurance to Government insurance. Eight out of ten people will be signed up to a Government program under his plan. I just strongly disagree. You don't want the Federal Government running your health care. When the Government starts paying, the Government starts deciding. And then the Government rations, and the Government chooses your doctor. It is not the right way to go when it comes to making sure there's quality health care for the people.

Let me talk about another issue, and then we're going to talk to our guests. I have made a commitment to our seniors not only to good-quality Medicare but to Social Security. And Tommy and I were talking about the 2000 campaign. We were coming down the stretch, and they ran some ads here in this State that said to the seniors of Wisconsin, "If George W. gets elected, you're not going to get your check." I don't know if you remember those. Tommy sure remembered them. Well, I want you to tell your friends and neighbors this: George W. did get elected, and the seniors got their checks. And the seniors will continue to get their checks. The Social Security trust, no matter what the politicians say, is in good shape for our seniors. It's going to meet—the seniors have nothing to worry about. Every 4 years, the scare tactics come out. I just assure you, you're going to get your checks. And baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But a President must deal with problems—you want a President who confronts problems, not passes them on to future generations and future Presidents. We have a problem with Social Security when it comes to our children and our grandchildren. When the baby boomer generation retires, there is a question as to whether or not the children will have a—Social Security accounts available for them unless we think differently. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn a greater rate of return than the current Social Security trust, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

Eric Sauey is with us. Eric, you ready to say something?

Eric Sauey. Yes, sir.

The President. Good. [*Laughter*] I hope so. I call him "Mr. President." He's the president of?

Mr. Sauey. Seats, Incorporated.

The President. Based in?

Mr. Sauey. Reedsburg, Wisconsin.

The President. What do you do?

Mr. Sauey. We manufacture seating for vehicles with wheels or tracks, other than passenger cars.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Sauey. Some of the markets that we serve are off-highway equipment, semi tractors, commercial turf mowers, firetrucks, delivery vans, many different custom-types of seats.

The President. Are you making a living?

Mr. Sauey. We're making a living.

The President. Good. Tell me—first of all, I want you to know—how are you organized?

Mr. Sauey. We're an S corporation. We're a family-run, family-owned business. We're an S corporation. We're in the process of trying to expand here into Richland Center. Some of the things that we have, from the basic values that we have—[*applause*].

The President. Sounds like they want you here. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Sauey. We have some values of a small business that were passed on to me by my father, who helped start this business, and my mother, that—we can't take all the profits out of the business. We have to put them back into the business to grow the business, to nurture it. I'm second generation. I hope to pass it—the business goes to my kids or nieces and nephews, and we can't do that if we're paying taxes. We need to invest that back into the business for capital, reinvestment, R&D.

The President. Perfect. Let me—so here's the tax relief. Remember all the rhetoric about the tax relief, "only certain people benefit." When you cut the taxes for everybody who pays taxes, you're benefiting small-business owners like Subchapter S corporations. Have you hired anybody this year?

Mr. Sauey. We've hired a lot of people this year. We're up to about 380 people right now; we're looking to hire more.

The President. Yes, see, they're hiring. They're expanding. They're growing. One reason why they're doing well, they've got innovative leadership. Isn't that right?

Mr. Sauey. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. Another reason why is they've got more money. See, the money is not going to the Federal Government; the money is staying with his company, which gives him the optimism and confidence to expand. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. Our economic policies recognize that and we say to people like Eric, "Go for it. Expand. Here's some extra money, your money to begin with." And he says he's going to hire. He may come here to Richland Center.

And so my opponent says, oh, he's just going to tax the rich. You're looking at the rich. [*Laughter*] You're looking at a man who said, "We may come to Richland Center. We may hire new people." They're less likely to expand and to hire new people if the Federal Government takes money from them. That just makes sense. That's just simple economics.

Let me ask you something. Do you ever invest?

Mr. Sauey. We invest a lot. Every year we invest in excess of $1½ million. This last year we've invested more than $2 million in capital equipment. We are in the process right now of installing a computerized—[*inaudible*]—machine, a computerized—[*inaudible*], a 400-ton punch press—[*laughter*].

The President. That sounded like a big one to me. [*Laughter*] You see, good tax policy says to businessowners, "Invest," because you know what investment means? Investment means jobs. And so in our tax policy we said to small-business owners that you're able to deduct up to $100,000 for equipment expensing in the year in which you buy it, as opposed to $25,000. And why did we do that? Because we want to encourage Eric to invest. And so he says he buys a 400-ton——

Mr. Sauey. Punch press.

The President. Punch press. [*Laughter*] Kind of hard to say if you're from Texas—[*laughter*]—punch press. But guess what, because of the decision he made, two things happened: One, his business is more productive; it's more likely that he can compete. He's bought a piece of equipment that makes him more competitive. And we live in a competitive world, and the more competitive he is, the more likely it is someone is going to work for his company. The more competitive he is, the more likely it is he's going to expand his business here. But guess what else, because he bought the 400-ton punch press, somebody had to make it. And when somebody makes it, somebody is more likely to find work at the punch press manufacturing business.

This economy is moving because people like Eric are confident about the future. He's sitting here in front of all these cameras and these people saying, "I'm going to expand my business." That's what you want to hear. And the question is, which one of the Presidential candidates, one, understands the importance of small businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit, and which one of us has the plans to make sure Eric feels comfortable investing and expanding his business? And I make the case to the people of Wisconsin, it is George W. Bush who understands that.

Ready to go, Greeley?

Jim Greeley. I'm ready for you, I think.

The President. All right. Jim Greeley, small-business owner. What do you do?

Mr. Greeley. Thank you.

The President. Greeley Signs, yes.

Mr. Greeley. Yes.

The President. Tell us what you do.

Mr. Greeley. Well, Mr. President, I have a sign company that I started about 30 years ago. And I'm at the point now where I'm passing it along to my son. But in the last 2 years, we've expanded with a 20,000 square foot addition. We've added new printing equipment so we can print giant posters, such as political posters. If you need any, you know where to look. [*Laughter*]

The President. It's a little late. You should have gotten your order in early. But anyway. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Greeley. We've added a laser engraver, and we've added several other such printing equipment——

The President. So you've been investing.

Mr. Greeley. Pardon?

The President. You've been investing.

Mr. Greeley. I've been investing, and we've been putting our money where our mouth is. We have to. We have to have confidence in the future of America——

The President. Right.

Mr. Greeley. ——and confidence in the future of this country.

The President. See, he's investing $140,000 this year. I hope you didn't mind me saying that. [*Laughter*] And he saved $27,000 as a result of the tax relief package, because of the investments. See, good tax policy says to Jim, "If you make a capital investment, there's an incentive to do so." And it's very important for people to understand that the reason we passed tax policy when we did was to help move this economy forward, and the best way to move it forward is to talk—is to address the needs of small-business owners. If 70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by the Jims of the world, then we ought to encourage him, and we ought to provide incentives for him to expand his business.

Did you hire anybody? Are you going to hire anybody? Tell me.

Mr. Greeley. Oh, yes, we'll keep hiring.

The President. Good. Well, it says here you hired three in 2004.

Mr. Greeley. Say again?

The President. You hired three people in 2004.

Mr. Greeley. Yes, we've hired three in 2004, and we'll hire more because we have plans of continuing to expand. In fact, we have dibs on another acre and a half of land.

The President. There you go.

Mr. Greeley. We want to keep on——

The President. See, here's what's happening in America. Small businesses hire 3 people there, 100 here, 50 there, and it's the real vitality of our economy, when you think about it.

I want to say something else about small-business ownership, two other things. And this relates to our farmers too. You heard both these men say they're thinking about passing their business on to their family members, but our Tax Code discourages that. The Tax Code makes it really hard for somebody—the Turgasens were talking about it, how hard it is to pass their dairy farm on to the next generation. You know why? Because this Tax Code of ours taxes a person twice, once when they're living and once when they die. And the death tax is hard on our small-business owners and really hard on our farmers. If you're interested in keeping family farms alive, then you need to support me when it comes to getting rid of the death tax forever. If you want there to be a small business—[*applause*].

Thank you, sir. You did a great job.

Mr. Greeley. Did you see the Packer-Dallas game? [*Laughter*]

The President. I saw that, and I know the Wisconsin Badgers are undefeated, you

know. And let me tell you what else I know. I know the Packers beat Dallas at Lambeau Field. Who invited you? [*Laughter*]

Anyway, you know, one of the things we did—good tax policy also helps families. And part of our tax plan was to help families be able to better afford life and better enable them to raise their children.

Margie Seamans is with us. When people are arguing about this Tax Code, remind them we raised the child credit to 1,000. We reduced the marriage penalty. By the way, there is a—I can't imagine a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage.

And so what do you do?

Margie Seamans. I work at Land's End, and I do payroll and scheduling.

The President. Very good company. Yes. And David—your husband, David?

Mrs. Seamans. Yes. My husband, David, is not employed right now.

The President. Right.

Mrs. Seamans. He has a back injury that he had in the service.

The President. Service, right.

Mrs. Seamans. And so he currently stays home right now.

The President. You're bringing home the money.

Mrs. Seamans. I'm bringing home the money.

The President. And children?

Mrs. Seamans. I have two children—Danielle, 13, and Megan, 11.

The President. Fabulous. Teenage years, I remember them fondly. [*Laughter*] The tax relief we passed saved this family $1,700 a year. Now that may not sound a lot to people in Washington, DC. It's a lot for this family.

Mrs. Seamans. It was a blessing when we received the child tax credit. My husband had outstanding medical bills, and we used those—used that money to pay for those. And just having that lower tax from my paycheck each week, it makes a big difference, a noticeable difference.

The President. See, here's the fundamental difference in the campaign. By the way, my opponent voted against all this tax relief. It would have cost the average family—middle-class family $2,000 extra in Federal taxes, and that's the philosophical difference. Who do you want spending your own money?

See, we're setting priorities in Washington, and we'll meet those priorities. You're going to hear me talk about a big priority here pretty soon, which is defending the homeland. But I believe this family can spend their money better than the Federal Government can spend their money.

Thanks for coming, Margie. I appreciate you being here.

Finally, we've got Corey Kanable. Welcome.

Corey Kanable. Thank you. [*Applause*]

The President. You've got quite a following here. [*Laughter*] I'll tell you why he's here. He bought a home. You know, one of the greatest things in America is when somebody opens up the door where they live and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." Do you realize the homeownership rate is at an alltime high under my administration.

So when did you buy it?

Mr. Kanable. We bought our home in July 2003.

The President. Good. What's it like? You like it?

Mr. Kanable. Oh, we love it. It's a three-bedroom ranch on the west side of town. It's a nice quiet neighborhood—most of the town is. It's real comfortable to be in your hometown. My wife, Gretchen, and I both grew up in this area and wanted to come back here and——

The President. Fantastic. Good.

Mr. Kanable. It allowed us to do so.

The President. And you were a renter before?

Mr. Kanable. We rented 2 years out of the area. And I mean, the American Dream of owning your own home was realized to us because of the tax credit and the interest rate. We couldn't go wrong.

The President. Well, this is important for, I think, for the future of this country, is to encourage owner—homeownership as well as ownership. We want youngsters being able to own and manage their own Social Security account. We want businesses flourishing and people to own their own small business. And we want people owning their own home. You

know why? Because when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of your country. I like to tell people, no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Kanable. Absolutely.

The President. So how has it changed your life? If somebody is watching and hears—says, "Gosh, I don't know whether I want to buy a home or not," how has it changed your life?

Mr. Kanable. Oh, it's great. I mean, you have something of your own, something you've invested in. We've had the privilege of doing some remodeling to it, things that, you know, it would be great to be able to do. We would like to do this. We recently were able to get a FEMA grant to fix our basement; it had a water problem. So now we can finish that off. You know, we're looking at new siding, new roofing, and maybe adding a garage on. We're planning on building a deck this spring, things that we just—you know, in an apartment, you can't do that.

The President. Right, it's your home.

Mr. Kanable. That's right.

The President. The tax relief saved this family $1,000 this year and last year. So you hear a person say, "Gosh, I'm thinking about adding a garage," you know, "I'm thinking about doing something to my piece of property." Tax relief has helped people realize their dreams. Tax relief is a vital part not only of helping this economy recover, but it's a vital part of enhancing the quality of life of our citizens. And that's why I'm going to keep your taxes low.

I've got a couple other things—if you've got time, I've got a couple other things on my mind.

First, I've been talking about a changing world, and it's important that we know the world is changing. In a changing world, jobs change, the nature of jobs change, the skill sets necessary to fill jobs change. That's why education is so vital. That's why we've got to make sure we get it right. The No Child Left Behind Act is a great piece of legislation because we believe in high standards and accountability. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something. We'll expand Pell grants for lower and middle-income families so more children are able to start their career with a college diploma. I'm a big believer in the community college system, because community colleges are able to devise curriculum for the jobs which actually exist, to be able to help people get the skills necessary to fill the new jobs which are being created.

But in times of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and families, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

And on these issues, there is a difference of opinion. My opponent's words on values issues are a little murky—[*laughter*]—but his record is clear. You know, the Congress in the mid-nineties voted on what was called the Defense of Marriage Act. It's an act that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. It received big bipartisan support. Republicans voted for it. Democrats voted for it. President Clinton signed the bill into law. My opponent was one of a few out-of-the-mainstream Democrats that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. He has said that the Reagan years were a period of moral darkness. There is a mainstream in American politics, and he sits on the far left bank. He can try to run, but he cannot hide from his record.

And finally, I want to talk to you about how to keep the peace. I want to talk to you about the overriding issue in this campaign, which is the security of the American people. See, all we've talked about is really important, but unless we're secure, unless we're able to achieve the peace, we won't be able to achieve a hopeful America. And the people are confronted with a clear choice in this campaign on this issue.

Let me tell you what I have learned and what I know about the post-September the 11th world. First, that we're fighting against a ruthless enemy that has no conscience, which means you cannot negotiate with them, you cannot appease them, you cannot

hope for the best with them. The way to deal with them and protect the American people is to stay on the offense, find them where they hide, defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. Secondly—[*applause*]. Thank you. Thank you all.

I tell people that if we show uncertainty or weakness during these troubled times, this world of ours will drift toward tragedy. It's not going to happen so long as I'm your President. I understand that we must not show weakness. We must be certain in our resolve. The terrorists must absolutely understand they can't intimidate us; they can't force us to not defend our freedom.

Second lesson is that when the President says something, he better mean what he says in order to keep this world peaceful. And I meant what I said when I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists." In other words, this is a different kind of—we have a different challenge to defend our country. And I was speaking at that moment in time specifically to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Why was I doing that? Because you might remember, some 3½ years ago, Al Qaida was training in Afghanistan. They were like the parasite, and the host was slowly but surely being overcome by the parasite, it seemed like to me. But there was a—kind of a convenience of philosophy. These people are ideologues of hate. They have a backward, dim vision of the world. I want the kids here to understand what life was like in Afghanistan. Young girls could not go to school. There was a grim ideology that expected certain things, particularly out of women. And if the women did not toe the line, they were taken to the public square and whipped and sometimes executed in a sports stadium.

These are barbaric people, the Taliban. This is their view of the world and Al Qaida's view of the world. They've hijacked a great religion. They hate what we stand for because we're the opposite. We believe in freedom. We believe people can express their opinion anyway they see fit, that you can worship the Almighty or not worship the Almighty in America and you're equally American. And if you choose to worship the Almighty, you're just as American if you're a Muslim, Jew, or Christian. That's what we believe in our country. And that's the opposite of them. They don't believe that.

And so I said, you know, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty." And they just ignored what we said. And we removed the Taliban from power, thanks to a great United States military, and as a result—it's important to uphold doctrine when you say it—sent a message throughout the world that when America says something, we mean it. When we say we're going to defend ourselves, we mean it.

And as a result of the Taliban being removed from power, Al Qaida no longer trains in Afghanistan. As a result of the Taliban no longer being in power, millions of citizens registered to vote and voted in a Presidential election. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman, the first voter in the Afghanistan election. Unbelievable moment.

Think about how far that society has come in a brief period of time. You know, I'm confident there were a lot of doubters as to whether or not democracy would take hold in Afghanistan. You can understand why. I mean, who would have ever thought that people that had been subjected to such a brutal life would conceivably want to vote. But they forgot what we know: Freedom lurks in everybody's heart. People want to be free in the world. Freedom is on the march, and America is more secure for it.

Thirdly, when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it comes to hurt us. Prior to September the 11th, if we saw a threat, we could deal with it or not deal with it because we felt secure. We felt oceans could protect us. But we learned a different lesson on September the 11th. It's essential the American people and the American President understand that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously. Elsewise, it might come and hurt us. I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein, and the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

And our strategy in Iraq is clear. We'll train Iraqi citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their freedom against the likes of Zarqawi. You know, I've heard the critics say, "Well, if we hadn't been on the offensive, the terrorists wouldn't be as active as they are." Well, Zarqawi was planning in

Afghanistan; he was in a training camp until we arrived and closed the camp down. Then he moved to Baghdad, where he's beheading people and setting off car bombs. What do these people think Zarqawi would be doing? Do they think he'd be kind of a peaceful small-business owner? [*Laughter*] He hates America. It is best we defeat Zarqawi in Iraq so he doesn't come here and hurt us. It is best we secure our country by defeating the enemy overseas.

And we're training the Iraqis to do the hard work. I remember the debates. He said, "Well, America is suffering all the casualties." That excludes and ignores the casualties being lost by the Iraqi people as they defend their own country. We mourn every single life in America, and we mourn the lives of those brave souls who are defending freedom in Iraq as well.

Iraq is going to have elections. Think about how far that country has come in a brief period of time from the days of torture chambers and mass graves, the days of a brutal tyrant. We're better off with America helping to promote liberty around the world. And so we'll get those countries on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as we can. And then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I want to thank those who are here who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform, our veterans. I appreciate your service to our country. I want to thank the military families who are here for your sacrifice. I want to thank those who wear the uniform. We got a great United States military. [*Applause*] And I want to assure—please be seated, thank you. We've still got a lot—a little work left to do. Just a little, then we're heading on the bus to Cuba City.

So I want to assure the loved ones of those who wear the uniform that so long as I'm the Commander in Chief, we'll give your loved ones all the support they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion of vital funding for our troops in harm's way, and it was important. It was important—such an important request that we got great bipartisan support. I want you tell your friends and neighbors of this startling statistic: 4 Members of the United States Senate, 4 out of 100, voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the funding to support our troops in combat—4 people, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate. Think about that—voted "yes" for the authorization but voted "no" when it came time to support the troops.

They asked him why, and he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I haven't been in any coffee shops in this part of the world; I suspect not a lot of people talk like that. [*Laughter*] He's given a lot of explanations since, a lot of them. One of the most interesting ones of all is, he finally said about the $87 billion vote, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our men and women in harm's way.

I believe that liberty has the power to transform societies. It's etched in my very being. Let me help make my case by describing our relationship to Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We like him a lot—I say, "we"; Laura and I do. We've had him to our ranch. He's a good man. I saw him in the U.N. I said, "You know, I'm out on the campaign trail, and I'm telling people about my relationship with you. I hope you don't mind." He said, "Oh, fine, go ahead and talk about it." What I didn't ask him was permission to tell you that Elvis was his favorite singer—[*laughter*]—true.

Anyway, so we have got a good relationship with him. And that's—I'm sure to some doesn't seem odd. "So what, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Japan working together; it's happened with other Presidents." That's right, except it wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with the Japanese. Some 60 years ago, Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America. There's a generation of Americans still alive today that fought in that war. My dad was one; your dads—I'm sure somebody here did that very same thing. There's a gentleman right there. Thank you, sir. There's another man. Yes, sir. There's another gentleman. Thank you. Another one—well, they're everywhere. Yes, sir, thanks. It makes my point. It wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with the Japanese. They were the bitter enemy of the United States.

And after we won that war, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally and worked to build a democracy in Japan. Now, there was a lot of skeptics. You can understand why. Why should we help an enemy? A lot of people's lives were turned upside down as a result of that war with the Japanese, and they weren't interested at all about helping the Japanese. I'm sure there were skeptics saying the enemy couldn't conceivably become a democracy—a lot of doubters. There was also people in this country had faith in the ability of liberty to transform societies. As a result of that faith, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace that we all want.

Think about that. Think about what liberty can do to a society. And that's what I want the young to understand, what's taking place in the world today. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly-elected leader from Iraq, talking about the peace in the broader Middle East. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe everybody yearns to be free. I believe people in the broader Middle East want to be free. I believe that because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

So I've come to your good city to ask for the vote and ask for your help. I know why I'm running again. I want to extend prosperity and hope to every corner of the country. I want to promote an ownership society where more and more citizens from all walks of life can say, "I own my home. I own my business." I want people to be able to realize a great tomorrow by making sure this country is safe and secure from an enemy. I know where I want to take us. We've done the hard work together over 3¾ years. We've climbed the mountain, and now we can see the valley below, a valley which is hopeful and prosperous and peaceful. And with your help, we will get there together.

God bless. Thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here. Thank you all. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at Richland Center High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Rita Kidd of Richland Center, WI; Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District, and his wife, Rachel, district administrator, Richland School District; John Cler, principal, Richland Center High School; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Cuba City, Wisconsin

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I am honored you're here. Thanks for coming today. You know, Cuba City is known as the City of the Presidents. Kind of makes sense that a President stops in to say hello, doesn't it? A few months ago, I was the first sitting President to pass through Cuba City. Today I'm the first sitting President to stop in and give a speech. And I'm looking forward to signing my name to the shield of the 43d President.

As I'm traveling your beautiful State asking for the vote and I'm asking for your help, I'd like to encourage you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. We have a duty in this democracy to vote. We have an obligation. When you get them headed to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats—[*laughter*]—people like Zell Miller, the Senator from Georgia who is strongly for my candidacy. Remind people if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Listen, I'm going to give you—I've been traveling Wisconsin a lot, giving people reasons to put me back into office. But perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Fine, you know, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the deal. [*Laughter*] She is giving a lot of speeches. And when she does, the American people see what I know, that she is compassionate; she is warm; she is a strong, great First Lady.

I asked Tommy to take on a tough job in Washington, DC, and he's done a heck of a job. I'm proud of Tommy Thompson. My only problem with being around Tommy, all he wants to do is talk about Wisconsin football. And of course he did have to bring up the Packers-Cowboy game as well, played right there at Lambeau Field. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Steve Freese for his introduction. I appreciate his service to your community in the statehouse. I want to thank my friend Mark Green, Congressman Mark Green, who's traveling with us. Thanks for coming, Mark.

I want to thank the mayor, Dick Davis. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for being here. It's kind for you to come. I want to thank the members of the City of Presidents Committee—right there. Thank you all.

I'm traveling with a fine man and his wife, Tim and Barbara Michels. He is going to make a great United States Senator. I appreciate him coming. And I want to thank my friend Dale Schultz, who will also make a great Congressman in the Third Congressional District.

I want to thank Sam McGrew, the superintendent of schools. Appreciate you being here, Mr. Superintendent. I want to remind you, Mr. Superintendent, when it came time to pick a Secretary of Education, I picked a superintendent of schools. And the reason why I did is because I understand local control of schools is important, and I understand a superintendent of a school district understands education firsthand. And I appreciate your service.

And I want to thank Tim Hazen, the principal of the Cuba City High School. Thank you, sir. [*Applause*] That's a good sign, when the students are cheering for you. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the—Danielle Wallenhorst, the student council president. Madam President, thank you for greeting me. Oh, there she is. Yes, there she is, good. Listen, I understand the football team has got a game tonight. I wish you all the best. Good luck to you. And as Tommy pointed out, the volleyball team here is really good too. I appreciate you being here.

Listen, thanks for coming. We're coming down the stretch in this campaign. And there are different candidates running with different points of view. You know where I stand, and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*]

Now, we both have records. I'm running on mine. He's running from his, and there's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics. The fellow I'm running against sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so.

I have a positive and optimistic vision for our future, a comprehensive strategy for victory in Iraq and for victory in the wider war against terror, a plan to make sure our economy continues to grow so that hope spreads its wings in every corner of America. My opponent has no plan, no vision, just a long list of complaints. But a Monday morning quarterback has never led any team to victory.

This election comes down to five clear choices for your families, for America's families: your family's security; your family budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that makes this a great country.

The first clear choice is the most important one because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they're determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war on terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, this world of ours will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch.

Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections of our homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain the All-Volunteer Army. We are relentless. We are determined. We're staying on the offensive. We're defeating the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here in our own country. And we're making progress. More than three-quarters of Al

Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them can be certain of this: We're on their trail.

A President has to lead with consistency and strength. In war, your tactics change but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you don't agree with me, you know what I believe, where I stand, and what I intend to do. On the good days and on the bad days, when the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win this war on terror, and I will always support the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform.

My opponent in this campaign has taken a different approach. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry says we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam makes us less safe. In our second debate, he said he always believed that Saddam was a threat, except a few questions later when he said Saddam was not a threat. [*Laughter*] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*]

Now he's saying he knew where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001 and that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. Let me talk about that for a minute. That's unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking. In fact, our commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, recently wrote this about Tora Bora: "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." The general says that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists in Tora Bora, and the intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, he said this about Tora Bora: "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said this about Tora Bora: "I think we've been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." All I can say to that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I want to thank those who wear the Nation's uniform that have joined us today. I appreciate your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here, who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to thank the military families who are with us today as well.

And I made a pledge to our troops and their families that they would have all they need to do their jobs and to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress and proposed $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. It was necessary funding. It was really important and so important that we got great bipartisan support for the vote—on the vote to fund the money. As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it. As you're out rounding up the vote, I want you to remind the people of this important part of the State of this startling statistic: 4 Members of the United States Senate, 4 out of 100, voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against supporting our troops in harm's way—only 4, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him, they said, "Well, how could you have made that vote?" And he said perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign—[*laughter*]—"I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Now, look, I didn't spend any time in the coffee shops around Cuba City, but I suspect you're not going to find many people who talk that way here. [*Laughter*]

He's given several explanations—you can't be calibrating the polls when it comes time to be supporting our troops. They said, well, when did he start changing his mind? Well, he started changing his mind about his position when it looked like he was losing to Howard Dean in the Democrat primary, right about the time this vote came up. See, earlier on TV, prior to the vote, he said it would be irresponsible not to support our

troops in combat. And sure enough, he took a look at the polls and decided not to support our troops in combat. A President must be consistent. A President must be willing to stand for what he believes.

In the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge—now remember, my opponent opposed President Ronald Reagan's doctrine of peace through strength. He didn't support removing Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, even though the international community united in concert. In moments of challenge and decision, he has chosen the path of weakness and inaction. Now, look, his record not only stands in opposition to me but in opposition to the great tradition of the Democrat Party of America. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I'd be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

We have big differences—we have differences in this campaign about how to keep you secure, and the differences are clear. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all. Those are his words. And the policies make it clear. He said that the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. Well, I want to tell you something. My outlook changed on September the 11th. I understand the stakes. I understand the consequences of inaction. I understand the consequence of sending mixed signals.

I remember standing in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. I will never forget the sights and the sounds. I will never forget the hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the guy looking at me straight in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending our security, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice involves your budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families, and I kept my word. And remember what we have been through as an economy. Six months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline. And then we had a recession and corporate scandals and the attack on America, which cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. I led the Congress to reduce your taxes, and our economic policies have led us back to growth. Think about these statistics and remind your friends and neighbors about these statistics. We've created 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. Farm incomes are up all across America. The farmers are making a good living. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. Small businesses are flourishing. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 5 percent.

And one of the reasons Wisconsin is doing so well is because your small businesses are flourishing and because the farmers are making a living. In 4 years, we'll—the next 4 years, we'll continue to help our dairy farmers. I support the MILC program to help the dairy farmers here in Wisconsin. We will make sure—we'll continue to open up markets for Wisconsin's farmers. I understand a good farm economy is necessary for a good national economy.

Look, we have a different point of view when it comes to taxes. My opponent has a different economic plan. It starts with the fact that he said he's going to raise taxes. And that's a promise most politicians keep. [*Laughter*] He's promised to spend $2.2 trillion in new money—spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] And they asked him, "How you going to pay for all that new spending?" And he said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." You've heard that

before, haven't you? See, there's a difference between what he's promised and how much he can raise. He's promised 2.2 trillion, but by running up the top two brackets, he only raises about 600 to 800 billion dollars. There's a gap. Guess who usually fills the gap? The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you because we're going to carry Wisconsin and win a great victory on November the 2d.

A third issue about the quality of our families and the life of our families is education and health care. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations in our schools. And I kept my word. The No Child Left Behind Act is a good, solid piece of legislation. It says in return for extra Federal money, schools must measure to show us whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. You can't solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And so by measuring early, we're correcting problems before they become too acute, before it is too late. And an achievement gap in America is closing all over America. People are learning to read and write and add and subtract, and we're not going to go back to the old days of mediocrity and low expectations in our schoolhouses.

And I've got a commonsense way to help on health care. Most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses ought to be allowed to pool together to extend risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get to do. I believe we ought to expand health savings accounts, low-premium, high-deductible, tax-free policies that enable people to manage and control their own health care. I know we're going to help the poor and the needy through community health centers and rural health centers. We're going to help sign up people for our low-income children's programs.

But also to make sure health care is available and affordable to you, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of medicine. I've met too many ob-gyns around our country that are quitting the practice of medicine because these lawsuits are running their premiums up too high on their insurance policy. They just can't practice. I met too many women who are wondering whether or not they're going to get the quality health care for themselves and their baby because ob-gyns are being run out of practice. This isn't right for America. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You've got to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients and the hospitals and the small-business owners. I am for medical liability reform—now.

You know, in one of our debates, my opponent looked right in the camera and said his health care plan—about his health care plan, "The Federal Government has nothing to do with it." You know, I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] See, I understand his plan. The Federal Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people will be signed up on a Federal program. When you make it easier to get on Medicaid, small businesses will drop insurance for their employees because the Government will pay for it, and that will cause about 7 or 8 million people to get on Medicaid. And when the Government starts writing the checks, the Government starts writing the rules. And then when the Government starts writing the rules, the Government starts making decisions for you. They start rationing health care. They decide what doctor you can go see. To me, that is the wrong prescription for health care in America.

Here's what I believe. I believe when it comes to health care, the decisions ought to be between patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. And I want to thank Tommy Thompson for his help. You know, you've heard this issue debated for years. Matter of fact, it became such a political hot potato they called Medicare,

"Mediscare." But Tommy and I ignored all that, and we decided to do what was right for our seniors. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicines with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 this year to help them on their cards and $600 next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Let me talk about Social Security. You all might remember the 2000 campaign here in Wisconsin, the ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors are not going to get their checks." That's the old-style scare tactics. When you're out there talking to your friends and neighbors, remind them, George W. did get elected, and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. When the baby boomers retire, it's going to be hard for the next generation to support us and then have a retirement system for their own. That's why we need a President to think differently about Social Security. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account, an account that earns better interest, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

You know, we have a difference of opinion on Social Security. My opponent said he's going to protect Social Security, but what he forgot to tell you is he's voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits. That's part of that record. See, that's just—see, he doesn't want you to know the record. He can run, but he cannot hide. That's what I say. He can run from it, but he can't hide from it.

And then he said, when it comes to Social Security, things are okay for the next generation. I think the job of a President * is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. You've got to expect from your President somebody who is willing to take on the tough issue, not have their finger stuck in the wind trying to figure out which way the winds are blowing but somebody who is going to do what is right. And what is right is to protect Social Security for our seniors and make it viable for the younger citizens of this country.

And finally, the final clear choice in this election is on the values that are crucial to keeping our families strong. And here my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization. I don't believe this is a partisan issue. As a matter of fact, when Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as the union between a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and President Bill Clinton signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Listen, reasonable people can find common ground on the most difficult of issues. Republicans and Democrats came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I proudly signed that bill. But my opponent was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, we just have a difference of opinion, a big difference of opinion. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent said the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood. [*Laughter*] Most American families don't look to Hollywood as a source of values. [*Laughter*] The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Cuba City, Wisconsin.

You know, one of my favorite quotes that I hope tells you what I believe and how I lead is by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea, and here's what he said. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone." That's how

* White House correction.

I feel about this country, optimistic and hopeful. I know we can achieve anything we set our mind to. You know, in the last 4—nearly 4 years, we've come through a lot together. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we see the valley below. And that valley is a valley full of prosperity and hope, a valley where people in this country feel comfortable about owning something, a valley where the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, where our families are strong. We're going to continue to spread freedom and liberty so we can achieve the peace that we all want for generations to come.

Four years ago, when I traveled your State asking for the vote, I made you this pledge: I said I would restore the integrity to the Oval Office. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. I appreciate it. Now I'm going to sign this shield.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at Cuba City High School. In his remarks, he referred to Wisconsin State Representative Stephen J. Freese; Mayor Richard Davis of Cuba City, WI; Samuel McGrew, district administrator, School District of Cuba City; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Dubuque, Iowa

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Listen, Laura and I are glad to be back in Dubuque and so honored so many came out to say hello. You lift our spirits. Really appreciate you coming. We're here, of course, asking for the vote and asking for your help. We need you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls, find our fellow Republicans, find independents, find discerning Democrats and remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

When I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, so long as you make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she is not holding me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's doing a wonderful job. You know, I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo; I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, his ability to get the job done.

I'm proud to be on the stage with Congressman Jim Nussle, and I want to thank his wife, Karen, for being here. He's the chairman of the Budget Committee. He's watching your money like a hawk—eye. Nussle is a good man, good, solid citizen from the State of Iowa and I'm proud to call him friend.

You know, we love your Senator, Chuck Grassley. I saw him the other day, and I said, "Say, Chuck, you know, the South Lawn has got a lot of grass"—[*laughter*]—"and we're looking for somebody to give us a hand." [*Laughter*] He's done a wonderful job as the chairman of the Finance Committee. I know the people of Iowa are proud that he's the Senator; I know you're going to put him back into office for 6 more years.

I want to thank Dale Schultz for coming. Dale is right there. He's from the Third Congressional District in the great State of Wisconsin. He's been traveling with me all day. Just in case anybody from Wisconsin is watching on TV, put this good man in as a Congressman.

I want to thank Dave Vaudt for being here. I want to thank Dave Roederer. I want to thank Doug Gross. I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band for entertaining you all. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people putting up all the signs and making the phone calls and helping turn out people to rallies in the Dubuque area. With your help, there is no doubt in my mind we're going to carry Iowa and win a great victory in November.

We have just one week to go. Voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and records. Now, you know where

I stand. And sometimes—sometimes you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I'm proudly running on mine. The Senator is running from his, and there's a reason why. There's a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank.

I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. I have a positive, optimistic vision for our future and a comprehensive strategy for victory in Iraq and the wider war against terror. My opponent has no plan, no vision, just a long list of complaints. [*Laughter*] But a Monday morning quarterback has never led any team to victory.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families: your family's security; your family's budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and to our future.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous and determined to strike us again. And this outcome—the outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against the terrorists. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft; the All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We are relentless. We are determined. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will continue to spread freedom and liberty. And we will prevail.

The President has to lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, you know where I stand, and you know what I intend to do.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people and I will always support the men and women who do.

My opponent has taken a different approach. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point. Senator Kerry says we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam made us less safe. He said in our second debate that he always believed Saddam was a threat, except a few questions later when he said Saddam Hussein was not a threat. [*Laughter*] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [*Laughter*] Now my opponent is throwing out a wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001, that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. It's an unjustified criticism of the military commanders in the field. It is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking.

Tommy Franks was our commander in Afghanistan, and here's what he said about Tora Bora. He said, "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." Tommy was there. Tommy says that Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists in Tora Bora and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Now, before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, here's what he said about Tora Bora on national TV in the fall of 2001. He said, "I think we've been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said about Tora Bora, "I think we've been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." Well, all I can say

to that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

Yet, my opponent's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East and possess the world's most dangerous weapons. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his colleague from Massachusetts opposed them. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right.

Just last year, American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan needed $87 billion to help them on their missions, to make sure they had all that was necessary in harm's way. First, Senator Kerry said it would be irresponsible to vote against the troops, then he voted against the troops. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] History has shown that Senator Kerry was right, then wrong, then briefly right, then wrong again. [*Laughter*]

You know, he's given quite a few answers about that vote, and finally, at one time he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. I thank our troops. I thank the families of our troops. And I thank the veterans who have set such a great example to our troops.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, my opponent has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt, of Harry Truman, of John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he has placed those commitments—replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run." Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I'd be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. All the difference—all the differences I've outlined today add up to one big difference. My opponent says that September the 11th, in his words, did not change him much at all. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

My outlook was changed on September the 11th. A few days after the attacks, I stood where the buildings fell, in Ground Zero. It's a day I'll never forget—the workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbed me by the arm, he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." After that morning, I wake—I've wakened up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will use every asset at our disposal. I will never relent in defending the security of the American people, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. And I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to help mothers and dads raise their children. We reduced the marriage penalty. Listen, I think the Tax

Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We created the lowest bracket of 10 percent, so to help families. We're reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes.

Now, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we have overcome, the obstacles this economy has overcome. You know, the stock market had been in decline for 6 months prior to my arrival. We were headed into a recession. And these corporate scandals which affected the economy—we passed tough laws, by the way, and we made it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. But because we cut your taxes, because we encouraged consumption and investment, because we recognized the contributions small-business owners make in this country, our economic policies have led us on the path to growth.

Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Our farm economy is strong. I campaigned here in the caucuses, and I campaigned in 2000, and I've been coming back to your State saying, "I support ethanol." We're supporting ethanol. I said, "I'm going to come back and open up markets so Iowa farm products are all around the world." We've opened up markets. Our farmers are making a good living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are flourishing. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high. And the unemployment rate in the State of Iowa is 4.7 percent. Our policies are working, and we're not going to go back to the days of Federal spending and Federal taxes.

We have a different point of view on the budget. My opponent has different plans. He's going to take a big chunk out of your budget. Listen, he's promised $2.2 trillion in new spending in this campaign. That's trillion with a "T." [*Laughter*] That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

And they asked him how he's going to pay for it. And he threw out the same old tired line, "We're going to tax the rich." Well, first of all, when you run up the top two brackets, you're taxing job creators. Do you realize most of the small businesses in America pay individual income taxes because they're either a Subchapter S or a sole proprietorship? Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. Senator Kerry's plan would tax the job creators of America, and that is bad economic policy.

And secondly, by taxing people who have earned over $200,000 or entities that have earned over $200,000, you raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. It doesn't take much math to figure out that's far short of the 2.2 trillion he's promised. So there's a gap, a gap between what he's promised and how he's going to pay for it. And guess who usually fills the gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. You do. The good news is, he's not going to tax you, because we're going to win Iowa and win a great victory.

The third clear choice involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important for our country's families. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed education reform to bring high standards into the classrooms and to make our schools accountable to our parents. We're seeing progress. Math and reading scores are rising. We are closing achievement gaps for minority students all across America. We'll build on these reforms. We'll extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll make sure health care is available and affordable. We'll expand health savings accounts so small—more small businesses can cover their workers and more families can get health care accounts they call their own and manage. In order to make sure our small businesses can afford health care, we ought to allow them to pool together, pool risk so they can afford insurance at the same discount that big companies get. We're going to make sure we take care of the poor and the indigent through community and rural

health centers. We'll work hard to make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program.

To make sure health care is available and affordable for you, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. I have met too many good doctors who have quit practicing medicine. Some of the saddest tales are those of ob-gyns. These lawsuits are running up the cost of premiums to the point where they can't afford to stay in business. So they leave their community. Some of them quit the practice of medicine. And that means there are expectant moms who are desperate—desperately worried about whether or not they'll get the health care they need for their child and for themselves.

You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the patients. I'm standing with doctors. I'm standing with small-business owners. I'm standing with hospitals. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

There is a big difference of opinion when it comes to health care between me and my opponent. I remember that debate when he looked right in the camera, and they asked him about his health care plan, and he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people end up on a Government program under his health care. Listen, when you make Medicaid more attractive, small businesses will stop providing insurance for their employees because the Government will. And that moves people from private care—private insurance to Government insurance. And you know what I know: When the Government starts writing the checks, the Government starts making the rules; and the Government starts making the rules, the Government starts making your decisions. They ration care; they decide what doctors you go to. No, Federal health care is the wrong prescription for health care in America. In all we do, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. We made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. You might remember the Medicare issue. People in Washington have been debating Medicare for years, and nothing got done. Well, thanks to working with Senator Grassley and Congressman Nussle, we got the job done for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

I remember coming to eastern Iowa during the congressional campaigns in 2002. I said that I understand Iowa's hospitals are not being treated fairly under Medicare. Nussle, you might remember—I stood and looked right in the camera. I said, "I'm going to work with Congressman Nussle and Senator Grassley to make sure Iowa's rural hospitals, in particular, are treated fairly." The bill I signed not only helps our seniors but it helps Iowa hospitals. I kept my word.

And we will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And I want to remind you what happened in the 2000 campaign. I don't know if it's happened here yet or not, but it certainly happened in 2000, when they made it abundantly clear to people that if I got elected, our seniors were not going to get their Social Security checks. That's the old scare tactics that they like to use. You might remember those ads. As you gather up the vote, I want you to remind people, George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. I don't care how they put it or how they try to scare you, our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, I think we're in pretty good shape when it comes to getting the checks when we retire.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about whether or not there will be a Social Security system available for them when they retire. And

that's why I think we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own payroll taxes and set them in a personal savings account, an account that earns a better rate of return, an account that they can call their own.

My opponent has taken a different approach on this issue. He said he is going to protect Social Security, but he forgot to tell you he's the only candidate in this race who voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You're wondering why you got those taxes on your Social Security benefits—there's one reason why, Senator John Kerry. And then when he talks about reforming the system for our youngsters, he had nothing to offer. The job of a President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring people together to strengthen the Social Security system for a younger generation.

And the final clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping our families strong. And here my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization, and I will defend it. This isn't a partisan issue. You know, when Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it and President Bill Clinton signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of the out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I proudly signed that bill. But Senator Kerry was part of the out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. As a matter of fact, he voted against parental notification laws. He voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

I don't know if you remember this in the campaign, but at one point my opponent said you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Most families don't look to Hollywood for a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Dubuque, Iowa.

All of these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country is at stake. The health and education for families are important. The retirement of our seniors, the direction of our culture—they're all at stake. And the decision is in the best of hands; it's in the hands of the American people.

I've got a—I see a great America coming. I see a hopeful day. One of my favorite quotes—I hope it helps capture how I feel about America—is what a fellow Texan named Tom Lea wrote. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone." In the course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of the time talking about the day that has gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming. I'm talking about a great day for America.

We've been through a lot together in the last nearly 4 years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we can see the valley below. We'll protect our families. We'll build on their prosperity. We'll defend the deepest values. We'll continue to spread liberty and freedom, achieving the peace we all long for.

You know, when I campaigned in your State—around your State in the caucuses and in the 2000 general election, I made you this pledge: I said if I was honored to be elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. We're on to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. at the Grand River Center. In his remarks, he referred to Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Iowa Auditor of State Dave Vaudt; David Roederer, Iowa State chair, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Lititz, Pennsylvania

October 27, 2004

The President. Listen, before I want to say something, I'm traveling with a guest and a friend who represents thousands of people all across this country who are affiliated with the Democrat Party. My friend has come from Georgia to share a message with you about how we're going to work with Republicans and Democrats and independents to carry the great State of Pennsylvania. Please welcome my friend Senator Zell Miller. [*Applause*] I'm thrilled to be traveling with him.

I told Zell when we landed, I said, "This is a good size crowd here, and there's a reason why: because we're going to carry Pennsylvania on November the 2d." And that's what I'm here to do. I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help. I'm asking that you turn out your friends and neighbors to the polls. I'm asking you to continue to make the phone calls and put up the signs. I'm asking you to do everything you can because with your help, we'll make America a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country for every single citizen.

Perhaps the most important reason to put me back into office is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a fine, compassionate, strong First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

What a great United States Senator Rick Santorum is. He and Zell serve in the Senate together. I'm proud to have Rick Santorum as my campaign manager for the State of Pennsylvania. I'm proud to—excuse me—call him friend, and I know you're proud to call him Senator. And I hope you put Arlen Specter back in there. We need to work with him for 6 more years.

I'm honored to be on the stage with Joe Pitts, Congressman from this area. I appreciate you being here, Joe. Thanks for your service. I want to thank Pat Toomey for the class he showed during the primary campaign. I appreciate his leadership and his service to the Congress.

I want to thank all the candidates who are here, people running for office. I wish you all the best coming down the stretch. I want to thank my friend Daron Norwood and the Matt Goss Band for singing.

Most of all, I want to thank you all. You've lifted our spirits for being here. You're kind with your time, and I want to thank you for coming. This election comes down to some clear choices——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This election comes down to some clear choices, clear choices for our families. We have issues of great consequence. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All the progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. It will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war, an ongoing threat unlike any we have ever faced before. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous, and they are determined to strike again. And the outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against the terrorists.

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protection of the homeland. Tom Ridge, the former Governor of your State, is doing a great job as the Secretary of Homeland Security. We're strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We're staying on the offensive. We're relentless. We are determined. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

And part of our strategy is to spread liberty. We believe in the transformational power of liberty to change societies. Think what happened in Afghanistan; think about what's happened there. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school, and if their mothers didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate which ran that country, they were whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. Because we acted in our self-interest, because we acted to destroy Al Qaida's capacity to train in Afghanistan, millions of people went to vote in a Presidential election. The first voter in that election was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march, and America is more secure for it.

Iraq will be having Presidential elections in January. That society has come a long way from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Free societies are hopeful societies. By spreading freedom and liberty, we not only secure ourselves in the short term, we spread the peace that we all long for so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a hopeful tomorrow.

A President has to lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics have to change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe and where I stand and where I intend to lead our country. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win this war on terror and to protect the American people. And I will always support the men and women who wear their Nation's uniform.

I want to thank those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the families of our military. And I want to thank the veterans who are here who have set such a great example. We have a duty to support those in harm's way with all the resources they need, necessary for them to do their job. That's why I went to the United States Congress and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in combat. And we got good support in the Congress. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the supplemental funding request, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As you're out gathering the vote and as you're out talking to people about this election, remind people of this startling statistic: Only four members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against providing the funding for our troops in combat—only four, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him—they asked him—I'm sure the people of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, are just as surprised as people all around the country when he gave his famous answer about his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] He's given a lot of explanations since then, a lot of them. One of the most interesting ones of all was that it was just a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

After repeatedly calling Iraq the "wrong war" and a "diversion," Senator Kerry this week seemed shocked to learn that Iraq was a dangerous place full of dangerous weapons. [*Laughter*] The Senator used to know that, even though he seems to have forgotten it over the course of the campaign. But after all, that's why we're there. Iraq was a dangerous place run by a dangerous tyrant who had a lot of weapons. We have seized or destroyed more than 400,000 tons of munitions, including explosives, at more than a—thousands of different sites, and we're continuing

to round up more weapons every day. I want to remind the American people, if Senator Kerry had his way, we would still be taking our "global test." Saddam Hussein would still be in power. He would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with our terrorist enemies.

Now, the Senator is making wild charges about missing explosives when his top foreign policy adviser admits, quote, "We do not know the facts." Think about that. The Senator is denigrating the action of our troops and commanders in the field without knowing the facts. Unfortunately, that's part of a pattern of saying almost anything to get elected, like when Senator Kerry charged that our military failed to get Usama bin Laden at Tora Bora, even though our top military commander, General Tommy Franks, said, "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." And our intelligence reports placed bin Laden in any of several different countries at the time.

Our military is now investigating a number of possible scenarios, including that the explosives may have been moved before our troops even arrived at the site. This investigation is important, and it's ongoing. And a political candidate who jumps to conclusions without knowing the facts is not a person you want as your Commander in Chief.

When it comes to your security—when it comes to the security of our families, my opponent takes a very different approach. He says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. Well, September the 11th changed me. I remember the day I was in the—at Ground Zero, on September the 4th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a man grabbed me by the arm, he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how to better protect America. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. And I kept my word. We've doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code should encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We created the lowest—a lower tax bracket of 10 percent so working families would get help. We reduced income taxes for everybody who paid income taxes. We helped our farmers. We helped our ranchers. We helped our small-business owners. After-tax income—that's the money in your pocket—increased by about 10 percent since I became your President.

Our economy has been through a lot, and I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about these facts. First, 6 months prior to our arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline, and then we had a recession. Then we had corporate scandals, and then the attacks of September the 11th cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after that fateful day.

But we acted. By cutting the taxes, we spurred consumption and investment, and our economic policies have led us back to growth. Our economy is growing faster than in any nation in the industrialized world. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in Pennsylvania is 5.3 percent. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Farm income is up. The small-business sector of our economy is flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

My opponent has very different plans for your budget. He's going to take a big chunk out of it. He voted against all the tax relief that I suggested Congress pass. If he'd had his way, the average family in America would be paying $2,000 more in taxes to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. All told, during his 20 years in the United States Senate, he has voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's five times

a year. I would call that a predictable pattern. [*Laughter*] When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] During this campaign, he's proposed $2.2 trillion of new spending. Now, that is a trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before. Be wary when you hear, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." My opponent has promised 2.2 trillion, but when you run up the top two brackets, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion. There is a gap between that which he promised and that which he can deliver. And guess who usually fills that gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Pennsylvania on November the 2d and win a great victory.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life of our families. A good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. And as President, I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to our classrooms and to make schools accountable to our parents. We're seeing progress all across America. Math and reading scores are on the rise. Achievement gaps, particularly for minority students, are closing all across our country. We're building on these reforms. We'll extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll continue to improve our lives. We're making health care more accessible and affordable. We will expand health savings accounts so small businesses can cover their workers and more families are able to get health care accounts they manage and call their own. We will create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will help families in need by expanding community health centers. We'll make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance programs.

And to help the families of Pennsylvania, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. Like other States, you've got an issue when it comes to these medical liability lawsuits. I met too many good ob-gyns who have been run out of practice because their premiums have gone up too high. I have met expectant mothers here in Pennsylvania who are worried about whether they and their baby will get the health care they need. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make your choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Pennsylvania, with the patients of Pennsylvania. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

My opponent has got a different view when it comes to health care. I remember our debate, when he looked right in the camera and he said his health care plan, "the Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people would be signed up to a Government program. Think about the idea of making it easier for people to sign up for Medicaid. It means small businesses will no longer provide coverage for their employees because the Government will. And people would be moved from private insurance to Government insurance. You see, when the Government writes the checks, the Government starts making the rules. And when it comes to health care, when the Government makes the rules, the Government starts making your decisions. And they start making the decisions for you, and they start making the decisions for the doctors.

His plan is a big Government-run health care plan. It is the wrong prescription for American families. In all we do to reform health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made

a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting $600 of help this year and $600 of help next year to help them afford prescription drugs. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

And we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and as we do so, we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. I want you to remember what happened in the 2000 campaign. It is—it's pretty predictable what takes place when it comes to elections. You might remember, they said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." Well, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors when you're out gathering up the vote that George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks under Social Security, no matter what the politicians try to scare you with. Baby boomers like me are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether the Social Security system will be there when they need it. And that's why I think younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account, a savings account that will earn a better rate of return, a savings account they call their own, a savings account that the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach when it comes to Social Security. He declared he will protect Social Security. But I want you to remind people that he voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits. And when it comes to the next generation, he hasn't offered anything at all when it comes to strengthening Social Security. The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. In a new term, I'll bring people together and strengthen the Social Security system for generations to come.

In this campaign, I'm speaking to the hopes of all Americans. The President's job is not to lead one party, but to serve the entire Nation. I'm proud to have lifelong Democrats like Zell Miller by my side, and he's joined by millions of other Democrats across our country who are supporting our ticket. As the citizens of this Nation prepare to vote, I want to speak directly to the Democrats. I'm a proud Republican, but I believe my policies appeal to many Democrats. In fact, I believe my opponent is running away from some of the great traditions of the Democrat Party. If you're a Democrat and you want America to be strong and confident in our ideals, I'd be honored to have your vote.

The Democratic Party has a great tradition of leading this country with strength and conviction in times of war and crisis. I think of Franklin Roosevelt's commitment to total victory. I think of Harry Truman's clear vision at the beginning of the cold war. I think of John Kennedy's brave declaration of American ideals. President Kennedy said, "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where the—that great tradition of their party has gone. My opponent takes a narrow, defensive view of the war on terror. As the United States of America hunts down the terrorists and liberates millions from tyranny and aids the rise of liberty in distant lands, my opponent counsels retreat, votes against supporting our troops in combat, downplays the power of democracy, and accepts and adopts a narrow so-called realism that is little more than defeatism.

I believe American leadership is the hope of the repressed, the source of our great security, and the greatest force for good in this world. I believe the liberation of captive peoples is a noble achievement that all Americans can be proud of. If you are a Democrat who wants America to lead with strength and idealism, I would be honored to have your vote.

The Democratic Party has a tradition of support for our public schools. The party of

Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey always stood up for the right of poor and minority children to get the best education America could offer. Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where that firm conviction has gone. Just as teachers and principals across America are lifting the sights of our schools and raising the test scores of minority children, my opponent is talking about weakening the standards and going back to the old days of stagnation and excuses for failure.

I got into politics and I ran for Governor of Texas because I wanted to challenge that soft bigotry of low expectations. I didn't want to stand by and watch another generation of students miss out on the opportunity of our great country. When I came to Washington, I made schools my first domestic priority. We've increased funding to record levels. We're demanding results for our children of every background. If you're a Democrat who believes in strong public schools that teach every child, I'd be honored to have your vote.

Americans of both political parties have always had respect and reverence for the institution of marriage. Never in our history has marriage been a partisan issue; it's not a partisan issue today. Yet, many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder, where is his commitment to defending the basic institution of civilization? He says he supports marriage, but he'll do nothing to defend it. My opponent even voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman. More than two-thirds of Democrats in the Senate supported that act, and President Bill Clinton signed it into law. On the issue of protecting marriage, the Senator from Massachusetts is outside the mainstream of America and outside the mainstream of the Democratic Party.

I believe that our society must show tolerance and respect for every individual, yet I do not believe this commitment of tolerance requires us to redefine marriage. If you are a Democrat who believes that marriage should be protected from activist judges, I'd be honored to have your vote.

The Democrat Party has also a great tradition of defending the defenseless. I remember the strong conscience of the late Democratic Governor from Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, who once said that when we look to the unborn child, the real issue is not when life begins but when love begins. I remember the moral clarity of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, who said that partial-birth abortion is, quote, "as close to infanticide as anything I have ever come upon." Many Democrats look at my opponent and see an attitude that is much more extreme. He says that life begins at conception but denies that our caring society should prevent even partial-birth abortion.

Preventing partial-birth abortion is an ethical conviction shared by many people of every faith and by people who have no religion at all. I understand good people disagree on the life issue, so I've worked with Republicans and Democrats to find common ground on difficult questions and to move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life. If you're a Democrat who believes that our society must always have room for the voiceless and the vulnerable, I would be honored to have your vote.

There are Democrats all over America, north and south, east and west, who believe their party's nominee does not share their deepest values. I know the Democrats are not going to agree with me on every issue. Yet on the big issues of our country's security, victory in the war against terror, improving our public schools, respecting marriage and human life, I hope people who usually vote for the other party will take a close look at my agenda. If you're a Democrat and your dreams and goals are not found in the far left wing of the Democrat Party, I'd be honored to have your vote. And next Tuesday, I ask you to stand with me.

And I want to thank each and every one of you who have come today for standing with me. I appreciate your support. I appreciate your convictions. I appreciate your good work. I believe in the future of this country.

One of my favorite quotes was written by a Texan named Tom Lea. He said this, he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During the course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of the time talking

about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

We've been through a lot together in the last 4 years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we can see the valley below. For the next 4 years, we'll protect our families. We'll build on the prosperity of our Nation. We will defend our deepest values. We will spread freedom and liberty around the world and continue to work for the peace we all long for.

You know, when I campaigned across this great State in 2000, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the integrity of the office to which I have been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at the Lancaster Airport. In his remarks, he referred to country music entertainer Daron Norwood; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Vienna, Ohio

October 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks so much for coming. My fellow Republicans, discerning Democrats, wise independents, I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help.

We're getting close to voting time here in Ohio. It's coming close to time for people to get out and exercise their responsibility in a free society. And so I'm asking you to get people to go to the polls. I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to do their duty. Don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like the mayor and Senator Miller. Don't overlook people who understand that I stand for all of America, that my vision is a vision for everybody. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Perhaps the most important reason why your fellow citizens ought to vote for me is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm sure many of you will relate to this. When I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "Okay, what is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she speaks, the American people see a warm, compassionate, strong First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Now, look, I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I see some others who are follically challenged. [*Laughter*] But you'll be happy to hear I did not pick the man because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

Nothing better than traveling throughout Ohio with Zell Miller. What a good man, good, down-to-earth, solid citizen of the United States of America. Zell, we're proud you're here.

And I want to thank George McKelvey, the mayor of Youngstown, Ohio. I can't thank him enough for his friendship and his strong support.

I'm proud to be with your fine Governor, Bob Taft. Governor, thanks for being here. I want to thank all the State and local officials, all the candidates who are running for different offices.

I want to thank my friend Sammy Kershaw. I appreciate you, Sammy. And I want to thank Lorrie Morgan as well. We're honored you're here. I want to thank the Boardman High School marching band for being here.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. You're lifting my soul and lifting my spirits. It is so great to see such a big crowd. I want to thank you for putting up the signs. I want to thank you for making the phone calls. I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we're coming down the stretch, which is to turn out that vote. With your help, there is no doubt in my mind, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. This election comes down to some clear choices for America's families, choices on issues of great consequence.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats to our Nation. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous, and they're determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror.

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence services. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft; the All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We are relentless. We are steadfast. We are pursuing the enemy across the Earth so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we are spreading liberty. I want you to tell your children what a monumental event has taken place in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school, and if their mothers didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate, the Taliban, they were pulled out in the public square and whipped and sometimes executed. But because we acted in our self-defense, because we acted to remove terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, because we upheld doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people in Afghanistan went to the polls to vote for a President. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march.

Iraq will have Presidential elections. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. We believe everybody wants to be free. We believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. And we believe that not because freedom is America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In war, sometimes you change your tactics but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know where I stand, you know what I believe, and you know where I intend to lead this country. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people. I will continue to lead with resolve. And I can assure you, I will always stand by the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform as they protect us.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003, asking for $87 billion to support our troops in harm's way. It was vital funding request. We got good support for that request except from a handful of people. I see we got a lot of veterans here. I want to thank you for serving and setting such a great example. You all know what I'm talking about when I say "support our troops in harm's way." You know how important that is. Well, most of them in Congress understood how important it was. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, Republicans, Democrats, independents, about this startling statistic: There were only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force and then did not provide the funding to our troops in combat—only four, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him about that vote, and you might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when John Kerry said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You know, I haven't spent as much time in Youngstown as the mayor has, but you know, I talked to the mayor, and he assures me not many people in Youngstown, Ohio, talk like that. [*Laughter*]

People in this part of the world like somebody who shoots straight with them.

They finally pressed him, and Senator Kerry finally said, after about four or five different answers as to—about why he made the vote he made, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A President must be consistent. After repeatedly calling Iraq the "wrong war" and a "diversion," Senator Kerry this week seemed shocked to learn that Iraq was a dangerous place full of dangerous weapons. [*Laughter*] The Senator used to know that, even though he seems to have forgotten it over the course of this campaign. But after all, that's why we went into Iraq. Iraq was a dangerous place run by a dangerous tyrant who hated America and who had a lot of weapons. We've seized or destroyed more than 400,000 tons of munitions, including explosives, at more than thousands of sites. And we're continuing to round up the weapons almost every day.

I want to remind the American people, if Senator Kerry had his way, we would still be taking our "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with our terrorist enemies.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now the Senator is making wild charges about missing explosives, when his top foreign policy adviser admits, "We don't know the facts," end quote. Think about that. The Senator is denigrating the actions of our troops and commanders in the field without knowing the facts. Unfortunately, that's part of the pattern of saying anything it takes to get elected, like when he charged that our military failed to get Usama bin Laden at Tora Bora, even though our top military commander, General Tommy Franks, said, "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality," and intelligence reports place bin Laden in any of several different countries at the time.

See, our military is now investigating a number of possible scenarios, including this one: that explosives may have been moved before our troops even arrived—even arrived at the site. The investigation is important and ongoing. And a political candidate who jumps to conclusions without knowing the facts is not the person you want as the Commander in Chief.

We have a very different perspective when it comes to protecting the American people. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Those were his words. That's what he said. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. My outlook was changed on September the 11th. It changed my view of risks we face.

I'll never forget the day when I was at Ground Zero on September the 14th, 2001. The sights and sounds of that day will never escape my memory. Workers in hardhats were yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the man coming out and grabbing me by the arm and looking me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I have awakened wondering how best to protect this country, trying to figure out everything we can do to protect you. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your families' budget, your wallet. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child to help you raise your kids. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent to help the working Americans. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes.

I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, remind them before they go to the polls, what our economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline—six months prior to my arrival. Then we had a

recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. We passed laws, tough laws that now make it abundantly clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We lost nearly one million jobs after the attacks on our country on September the 11th, 2001. We have been through a lot.

But our economic policies, our policies of helping the small businesses and helping the families, have led us back to growth. Our economy is growing as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We have added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. I understand you've had tough times in Ohio. I know that. I've traveled your State a lot. But let me remind you, things are getting better here. The unemployment rate dropped from 6.3 percent to 6 percent last month. We added 5,500 new jobs in one month here in the State of Ohio.

But there's more work to be done. There's more work to be done. I signed a bill last week to help our manufacturing sector here in Ohio and across the country. We'll continue to support our community colleges. We've expanded trade adjustment assistance to make sure our workers have got the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We have overcome a lot together. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has a different point of view, a different view about your family's budget. To put it bluntly, he intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted for all the tax relief—against all the tax relief. We put the tax relief up there to stimulate the economy, to encourage consumption, to help investment, to stimulate our small businesses. And he voted "no." If he had had his way, the average family in America would be paying 2,000 more dollars in income taxes to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in the United States Senate 20 years, and he's voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's five times a year. I would call that a predictable pattern. [*Laughter*] I would call that as an indicator. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] I also want to remind you, he's promised $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts.

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He threw out that same old, tired line we've heard every 4 years: "Oh, I'll pay for it by taxing the rich." The problem is, is that when you raise the top two brackets, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. There is what I would call a tax gap. That would be the difference between what he's promised and what he can pay for. And when you have a tax gap like that and you've got a man of his record running for President, guess who usually gets to pay?

Audience members. We do!

The President. Here's the good news. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Ohio and win a great victory. Senator Kerry can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A good education and quality health care are important for our families. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to our schools. We increased Federal spending, but instead—in return for Federal spending, increases of Federal spending, we said, "Measure. Show us." We believe in accountability. You cannot solve a problem unless you diagnose a problem. We are diagnosing and solving problems all across America. Math and reading scores are up. The achievement gap for minority students across our country is closing. We'll extend these kind of reforms and high standards to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll improve our lives for our families by making sure health care is affordable and accessible. We'll take care of the low-income and the needy by expanding community health centers across our country. We will work to make sure our low-income children's health program is fully subscribed. To make sure health care is affordable, we will promote health savings accounts, which will help

our families and small businesses better afford insurance. We will allow small businesses to pool risk, to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do.

And to help families and small businesses afford health care, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. We have a problem when it comes to these lawsuits. I have met too many ob-gyns that are being run out of the practice of medicine because their premiums are too high. I have met too many pregnant moms who are worried about their health care and the health care of their child because they can't find an ob-gyn that's close to the community in which they live. This is a national problem that requires a national solution. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Ohio, the patients of Ohio. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

I remember one of those debates when my opponent looked straight in the camera and said—when asked about his health care plan, he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. About 80 percent of the people who sign up for health insurance under his plan will end up on the Government. Do you realize, when you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, small businesses will no longer provide insurance because the Government will provide insurance, moving people from the private sector to the Government? Now, listen, when the Government starts writing checks, the Government starts making rules. And when the Government starts making rules, the Government starts making decisions on behalf of the people, and the Government starts to ration health care, and they decide your doctors, and then they start telling your doctors what to do. Federally-run health care is the wrong prescription for America's families. In all we do to improve health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. We are strengthening Medicare. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Poor seniors can get $600 worth of help on their drug discount card this year and next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get a prescription drug benefit when it comes to Medicare.

And we'll keep our promise of Social Security for our seniors. Let me remind you about what took place in the 2000 campaign. That same old, tired scare tactic was unleashed—probably being done today too, who knows. People said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." Now, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors, George W. did get elected, and the seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me and a couple of others I see out there, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be available for them when they retire. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account, an account that earns a better rate of return, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He has said that he is going to protect Social Security, but I want you to remind your friends and neighbors of this fact: He's the only candidate in this race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run from that record, but I'm not going to let him hide.

And when it comes to the next generation, when it comes to our children and our grandchildren, he hasn't offered any reform. See, the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Social Security so our children will be able to have a Social Security system that works.

In this campaign, I'm speaking to the hopes of all Americans. The President's job is not to lead one party but to serve one Nation. I'm proud to have lifelong Democrats like Zell and George by my side in this campaign, and they're joined by millions of other Democrats all across this country. As the citizens of this Nation prepare to vote, I want to speak directly to the Democrats. I'm a proud Republican, but I believe my policies appeal to many Democrats. In fact, I believe my opponent is running away from some of the great traditions of the Democratic Party. If you're a Democrat and you want America to be strong and confident in our ideals, I would be honored to have your vote.

The Democratic Party has a great tradition of leading this country with strength and conviction in times of war. I think of Franklin Roosevelt's commitment to total victory. I think of Harry Truman's clear vision at the beginning of the cold war. I think of John Kennedy's brave declaration of American ideals. President Kennedy said, "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where that great tradition of their party has gone. My opponent takes a narrow, defensive view of the war on terror. As the United States of America hunts down the terrorists and liberates millions from tyranny and aids the rise of liberty in distant lands, my opponent counsels retreat. He votes against supporting our troops in combat. He downplays the power of democracy and adopts a narrow so-called realism that is little more than defeatism.

I believe—I believe that American leadership is the hope of the oppressed, the source of security, and the greatest force for good in this world. I believe the liberation of captive peoples is a noble achievement that all Americans can be proud of. I believe that our troops in the field need our support 100 percent of the time.

If you are a Democrat who wants America to lead with strength and idealism, I would be honored to have your support. The Democratic party has a tradition for support of our public schools. I think about Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, who always stood up for the right of the poor and minority children to get the best education America could offer. Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where that firm conviction has gone. Just as teachers and principals across America are lifting the sights of our schools and raising the test scores of minority children, my opponent is talking about weakening the standards and going back to the old days of stagnation and excuses for failure.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I got into politics and I ran for Governor of my State because I would not stand by and watch another generation of students miss out on the opportunity of America. And when I came to Washington, I made schools my top domestic priority. If you are a Democrat who believes in strong public schools that teach every child, I'd be honored to have your vote.

Americans of both political parties have always had respect and reverence for the institution of marriage. Never in our history has marriage been a partisan issue, and it's not a partisan issue today. Yet, many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder, where is his commitment to defending the basic institution of civilization?. He says he supports marriage, but he will do nothing to defend it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My opponent even voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman. And two-thirds of the Democrats in the Senate supported it, and my predecessor, Bill Clinton, signed it into law. On the issue of protecting marriage, the Senator from Massachusetts is outside the mainstream of America and outside the mainstream of the Democratic Party.

I believe that our society must show tolerance and respect for every individual. Yet,

I do not believe this commitment to tolerance requires us to redefine marriage. If you are a Democrat who believes that marriage should be protected from activist judges, I'd be honored to have your vote.

The Democrat Party is also a great tradition of defending the defenseless. I remember the strong conscience of the late Democratic Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, who once said that when he looked to an unborn child, the real issue is not when life begins but when love begins. I remember the moral clarity of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, who said that partial-birth abortion is, quote, "as close to infanticide as anything I have come upon."

Many opponents—many Democrats look at my opponent and see an attitude that is much more extreme. He says that life begins at conception but denies that our caring society should prevent even partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. Preventing partial-birth abortion is an ethical conviction shared by many people of every faith and by people who have no religion at all. I understand good people disagree on the life issue, and I'll continue to work with Republicans and Democrats to find common ground on the difficult questions and move this good-hearted Nation toward a culture of life. If you are a Democrat who believes that our society must always have room for the voiceless and the vulnerable, I would be honored to have your vote.

I know that Democrats are not going to agree with me on every issue, yet on the big issues of our country's security, victory in the war against terror, improving our public schools, respecting marriage and human life, I hope people who usually vote for the other party will take a close look at my agenda. If you are a Democrat and your dreams and goals are not found on the far left wing of the Democratic Party, I'd be honored to have your vote. And next Tuesday, I ask you to stand with me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am optimistic about our great land. I love my country. The great strength of America is found in the hearts and souls of our people. What a fantastic land we have. One of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan, a fellow named Tom Lea. And here's what he said, he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." You know, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

Because we have done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we can see the valley below. Over the next 4 years, we'll work to protect our families; we'll build our prosperity; we will defend the deepest values. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to spread liberty so we can achieve the peace we want for our children and our grandchildren.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made you this pledge: I said if I was—if I happened to win that election, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. at the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to country music entertainers Sammy Kershaw and Lorrie Morgan; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Findlay, Ohio

October 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. You know, it is such a beautiful day in Flag City, I think I'll just take off my jacket and stay a while. Thanks for coming out. You are lifting our spirits. We're honored you're here. And Laura and I have come with the great

Senator from Georgia to not only ask for your vote but to ask for your help. We need your help coming down the stretch to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls.

We have a duty in our democracy to vote. We have an obligation to vote. So I'm asking you to tell your friends and neighbors about that obligation. Get our Republicans to go out there. Get independents to go out there. And find those discerning Democrats like Zell Miller and head them to the polls. And when you get them to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America and a stronger America and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I have been traveling your State a lot, and I enjoy it. I have had a chance to say hello to a lot of the citizens from Ohio. And I've been telling them why they ought to put me back in office. But perhaps the most important reason why I ought to have 4 more years is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm sure some will be able to relate to this story. You know, Laura and I went to the seventh grade together in San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. We became reacquainted. She was a public school librarian, and when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "Okay, what is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she did not hold me to that promise. She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a warm, compassionate, strong First Lady.

I'm looking around. I see some people out there who are follically challenged. [*Laughter*] And think about that, it reminds me of my Vice President. [*Laughter*] Dick Cheney is a great Vice President. He does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] But you all will be pleased to hear, I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because he's getting the job done for the American people.

It's a joy to travel with my friend Zell Miller. He's strong. He is courageous. He puts party aside and puts his country first, and for that, I am grateful.

I call him Ox; you call him Congressman. Mike Oxley is as fine as they are in the House of Representatives. He's a good man, and I appreciate his service. And I want to thank his wife, Pat, for joining us as well. And I am proud to be up here, or close by, with the fine United States Senator, Michael DeWine. He's doing a good job for the people of Ohio, as is George Voinovich. Make sure you put George back in. And I appreciate Fran DeWine joining us.

I want to thank Congressman Paul Gillmore for being here today.

I want to thank your Governor, Bob Taft, for joining us today. Mr. Governor, I appreciate your service to the State of Ohio. I want to thank Jennette Bradley for joining us today, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Ohio.

I appreciate Mayor Iriti for joining us today. Mr. Mayor, you didn't ask me for any advice, but I'm going to give you some: Fill the potholes. Mayor Iriti is a good man, and I appreciate him being here. And I want to thank you, Mr. Mayor, for serving. I want to thank all the other State and local officials.

I want to thank the Findlay High School Marching Band for joining us. I want to thank Wil Gravatt Band for joining us today.

Most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people who are putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls, the people who have worked so hard to make this rally such a successful rally. I want to thank you for what you have done, and I want to thank you for what you are going to do, which is turn out that vote. And with your help, there is no doubt in my mind, we'll carry Ohio again and win a great victory on November the 2d.

This election comes down to some clear choices for America's families, choices on issues of great consequence. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and of ongoing threat unlike any we have faced before. The terrorists who kill

thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they are determined to strike. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We have strengthened the protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming the United States military. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. There will be no draft. We are relentless. We are determined. We are staying on the offensive so we do not have to face these terrorists here at home.

And we're spreading freedom and liberty. Some amazing things have happened in a short period of time. I want the youngsters here to understand what has happened in the world. In Afghanistan, 3½ years ago, young girls couldn't go to school. And if their mothers did not toe the line of the ideologues of hate who ran that country, they were whipped in the public square, sometimes executed in a sports stadium. We acted to defend ourselves. We upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." And in so doing, we liberated people from the clutches of those barbaric people called the Taliban. Millions of people went to vote in a Presidential election. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march.

It's never easy to go from tyranny to liberty, but that's where we're headed. There will be elections in Iraq. Think how far that country has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers. I believe everybody in the world yearns to be free. I believe people deep in their soul want to live in a free society. I believe that because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes you have to change your tactics but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, you know where I stand, and you know what I intend to do. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I will do everything we can do to defend the American people and win this war against the terrorists. And I will always support the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform.

We have got a great United States military. And I am proud to be their Commander in Chief. I want to thank the families of those who wear our Nation's uniform. I want to thank you for your sacrifices. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

As I've told families all across this country, we will make sure your loved ones have the support necessary to complete their missions. And that's why I went to the United States Congress and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding in September of 2003, necessary funding, important funding to support our troops in harm's way. And we received good support for that. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding for our troops, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I would like for you to share this startling statistic with your friends and neighbors as you get them going to the polls: There were only 4 Members of the United States Senate—4 out of 100—that voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against supporting our troops in harm's way, and 2 of those 4 were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, you might remember his—Senator Kerry's explanation about that vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." Now, I haven't spent much time in the coffee shops of Findlay, but I suspect you're not going to find many people in this part of the world who talk that way.

They kept pressing him about it. He's given four or five different explanations about the vote. One of the most interesting ones of all that speaks to my opponent, said, "Well, the whole thing was just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

After repeatedly calling Iraq the "wrong war" and a "diversion," Senator Kerry, this week, seemed shocked to learn that Iraq was a dangerous place full of dangerous weapons. [*Laughter*] The Senator used to know that, even though he seems to have forgotten it over the course of the campaign. But that's why we went there. See, Iraq was a dangerous place run by a dangerous tyrant who hated the United States. And he had a lot of weapons. And we've seized or destroyed more than 400,000 tons of munitions, including explosives at thousands of sites. And we're continuing to round up weapons nearly every day.

Now, I want to remind you all, if Senator Kerry had had his way, we would still be taking our "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And Saddam Hussein would still be in power, and he would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with a terrorist enemy. Now, the Senator is making wild charges about missing explosives. One of his top foreign policy advisers admits he doesn't know the facts. He said, "I don't know the truth," end quote. Well, think about that. The Senator is denigrating the actions of our troops and commanders in the field without knowing the facts. Our military is now investigating a number of possible scenarios, including that the explosives may have been moved before our troops even arrived at the site. This investigation is important, and it is ongoing. And a political candidate who jumps to conclusions without knowing the facts is not the person you want as the Commander in Chief.

Unfortunately, that is part of a pattern. My opponent is throwing out the wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001 and that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. You might remember that. He kept repeating that in the debates. Well, this is unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the kind of—worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking, what we've come to expect from him, however.

In fact, our commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, recently wrote this about Tora Bora: "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." He went on to say—the General says, "American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists at Tora Bora" and that "intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries." That's what Tommy Franks, who knew what he's talking about, said.

Poor Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views. He saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national television, he said this about Tora Bora: "I think we've been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said about Tora Bora: "I think we have been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track," end quote. All I can say about that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

The security of our families is vital, and it's important to our people of this country to understand the records. Senator Kerry's record on national security has the far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of forces to liberate Kuwait. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his

Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we have got to be fair—that Senator Kennedy was right.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt, the party of Harry Truman, the party of John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. And traveling Ohio, I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The second clear choice in this election concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. And I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child to help our families. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent. We reduced income taxes for everybody that pays income taxes. After-tax income—that's money in your pocket—has gone up by about 10 percent since I became your President.

And I want you to remind your friends and neighbors, when you're out there getting people to the polls, what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline. Then we had a recession. Then we had corporate scandals. But we passed what's called the Sarbanes-Oxley bill, a bill that makes it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And I want to thank Congressman Oxley for authoring this legislation. And then we got attacked on September the 11th. Those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after that fateful day.

But our economic policies have led us back to growth. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Homeownership in America is at an alltime high. We saw a lot of good farmland, flying in today. The farm incomes are up all across America. Our small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

I know there are placed hurting here in Ohio. I've traveled into those neighborhoods. I've talked about an economic plan to continue growth. But I want to remind you that just last month, the unemployment rate in the State of Ohio went from 6.3 percent to 6 percent, and this great State added 5,500 new jobs in 1 month. We're on the move. We're moving forward.

My opponent has very different plans for your budget. He's going to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the child tax credit. He voted against marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. And if his way had prevailed, the average family in America would have been paying 2,000 more in taxes to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That may not seem like a lot to folks in Washington. It means a lot to people in Findlay, Ohio.

He served in the United States Senate for 20 years, and he's voted for higher taxes 98 times. That's five times every year he served in the Senate. I would call that a predictable pattern—[*laughter*]—a reliable indicator. [*Laughter*] When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] Around the campaign, he's been promising $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said that same old, tired line you've heard over and over again,

"We're going to tax the rich." Well, there's a problem with that. When you run up the top two brackets, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion he has promised. I would call that a tax gap. And guess who gets to usually fill that tax gap?

Audience member. We do!

The President. You do. The good news is we're going to carry Ohio, and we're not going to let him tax you.

The third choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important for your future. As a candidate, I pledged to end the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed a really good piece of reform legislation. We're raising the standards. We've increased Federal spending, but now we're asking for results. We want to measure. See, you can't solve a problem unless you've diagnosed the problem. And we're diagnosing problems all across America, and we're beginning to solve them. Our test scores in reading and math are up. We're closing achievement gaps for minority students all across America. We'll build on these reforms and extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in our country.

We'll continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and accessible. We'll make sure the poor and the indigent get health care in what's called community health centers. We'll make sure our low-income—our program for low-income—children in low-income families is fully subscribed so they get health care. To make sure health care is affordable, we'll help our small businesses. We'll allow them to pool together so they can spread risk and buy insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do. We will expand health savings accounts, which will help our families and small-business owners.

Let me tell you what else we need to do. We need to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. I was in Canton the other day talking to a ob-gyn who got run out of business because these lawsuits made her premiums too high to practice medicine. And I met too many citizens not only in your State but across the country, too many moms, expectant moms, who are worried about their health care and the health care of their baby because these lawsuits have made ob-gyn care more scarce. This is a national problem. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-injury-attorney at the same time. You've got to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Ohio. I'm standing with the patients of Ohio. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In one of our debates, my opponent looked straight in the camera when they asked him about his health care plan, and he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I'll be frank with you, I could barely contain myself. The Government has got a lot to do with his plan. Eighty percent of the people who sign up on his plan would end up on the Government. See, if you make it easier for people to sign up for Medicaid, it means small businesses are likely not to provide insurance for their employees because the Government will provide insurance for their employees. That's logical. And when the Government starts writing the checks, the Government starts making the rules. And when it comes to health care when the Government's making the rules, the Government starts making decisions for you and decisions for your doctor. The wrong prescription for health care in America is to increase the role of the Federal Government. In all we do to improve health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election comes to your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. We have modernized Medicare for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

And we'll keep our promise for Social Security for our seniors, and we will strengthen Social Security for generations to come. I remember the campaign in 2000. I remember those ads they were running. You might remember them. They said, "If George W. gets elected, the seniors are not going to get their checks." They may be doing it again this year. I want you to remind your friends and neighbors as you get them to the polls that George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. Nobody's going to take away your check. Baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust. We'll probably get our checks.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not the Social Security system will be there for them when they retire. That's why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money—some of their own payroll taxes—and put it in a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

Now, my opponent takes a different approach. He says he's going to strengthen Social Security; he's going to protect it. But you might remember, he is the only candidate in this race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He doesn't like talking about that. He can run, but he cannot hide.

And he offered nothing for the younger generation in terms of reform. The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I will bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen the Social Security system for generations to come.

And the final choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping our families strong. And here, my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization, and I will defend it. This is not a partisan issue. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it and President Bill Clinton signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe that reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I proudly signed that bill. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against parental notification laws and against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I will continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

At one point in this campaign, you might remember this: My opponent said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Most American families do not look toward—to Hollywood as a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Flag City, Ohio.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our families, the retirement of our citizens, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. And the decision is in the best of hands. It is in the hands of the American people. It is in your hands. You get to decide. And that gives me great confidence.

See, I'm optimistic about this country and our future. One of my favorite quotes is from a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said this, he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During the course of this campaign,

my opponent has spent much of his campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that's coming.

We've been through a lot together. We have been through a lot together during the last nearly 4 years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we can see the valley below. The next 4 years, we'll work to protect our families, build our prosperity, and defend our values. We will work hard to spread freedom and liberty so we can achieve the peace we want for generations to come.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made you this pledge, that if I was elected to the office I hold, I would uphold the honor and its dignity. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at the Hancock County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Fran DeWine, wife of Senator Mike DeWine; Gov. Bob Taft and Lt. Gov. Jennette B. Bradley of Ohio; Mayor Anthony P. Iriti of Findlay, OH; country music entertainers the Wil Gravatt Band; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Pontiac, Michigan

October 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Laura and I appreciate you all being here. You're lifting our spirits, and we're grateful. I'm so honored you're here. I'm here in Michigan today and tomorrow. I'll be back on Saturday. I'm here to ask for the vote and to ask for your help. It is important for all of us to vote. In a free society we have a duty to go to the polls. And so I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls and exercise their duty. And as you get them headed to the polls, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats like my friend Zell Miller from the great State of Georgia. Make sure you talk to independents and, of course, our fellow Republicans. And when you get them to the polls, remind them that if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

You know, Laura and I love to campaign, and I like to tell people why I think people ought to put me back in. And perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. I am proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I see some folks out here who are follically challenged, kind of like the Vice President. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. You'll be pleased to hear, I did not pick him because of hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because he's the got the ability to get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank my friend Michael Williams for joining us today. And I want to thank the other African American leaders I'm proud to call friend, who have joined me on this stage, including the Lieutenant Governor from the State of Maryland, Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele. I appreciate you coming, Michael.

I want to thank Joe Knollenberg and Thad McCotter, Members of the United States Congress from Michigan. I particularly want to thank Congresswoman Candice Miller for leading my campaign in Michigan. I want to thank Terri Lynn Land. I want to thank Betsy DeVos. I want to thank the entertainers who were here today.

And I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people who put up the signs and made the phone calls and helped turn out this huge crowd. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you are going to do as we come down the stretch. With your help, with your hard work, there is no doubt in my mind we will carry Michigan and win a great victory on November the 2d.

This election comes down to some clear choices for our families, issues of great consequence. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other

issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Our strategy is clear. We're strengthening protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming the United States military. There will be no draft. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We are determined. We are relentless. We will fight the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. And we understand that our long-term security comes from spreading freedom.

I want some of the younger folks here to understand how far the world has come in about 3¾ years. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls were not able to go to school in Afghanistan because the Taliban was so barbaric, and if their mothers didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate, they'd be taken in the public square and sometimes killed in a sports stadium. Because we acted to defend ourselves, because we upheld a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people went to the polls to vote for a President. The first voter in the Afghan Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman.

There will be Presidential elections in Iraq in January. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and we're more secure for it. Free societies are peaceful societies, and we believe everyone desires to live in freedom. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes our tactics have to change but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, where I stand, and where I intend to lead this Nation. On good days and on bad days, when the polls are up or when the polls are down, I will do everything I can to defend the American people, and I will support our troops in combat.

I am honored to be the Commander in Chief of such a fine group of people, the people in the United States military. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example. I want to thank the military families who are here. And I will assure you that so long as I'm the Commander in Chief, our troops will have that which is necessary to complete their missions.

That's why I went to the United States Congress and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in combat. As you gather the vote, I want you to remind people of this startling statistic: There were only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops in harm's way—only four Members—two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him why he made his vote, and Senator Kerry uttered perhaps the most famous statement of the 2004 campaign when he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Commander in Chief must be consistent. After repeatedly calling Iraq the wrong war and a diversion, Senator Kerry this week seemed shocked to learn that Iraq was a dangerous place full of dangerous weapons. The Senator used to know that, even though he seems to have forgotten it over the course of the campaign. Of course, that's why we went into Iraq. Iraq was a dangerous place run by a dangerous tyrant who hated America and who had a lot of weapons. And we have seized or destroyed more than 400,000 tons of munitions, including explosives, at thousands of different sites. And we're continuing to round up more weapons almost every day.

I want to remind the American people if Senator Kerry had had his way, we would still be taking our "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We would be waiting for yet another United Nations resolution to make us more safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Saddam Hussein would be in power. He would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with the terrorist enemy.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, the Senator is making wild charges about missing explosives, when his top foreign policy adviser admits he does not know the facts. He said, quote, "I don't know the truth," end quote. But think about that. The Senator is denigrating the actions of our troops and commanders in the field without knowing the facts.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Our military is now investigating a number of possible scenarios, including that the explosives may have been moved before our troops arrived. This investigation is important. It's ongoing. And a political candidate who jumps to conclusions without knowing the facts is not a person you want as Commander in Chief.

Unfortunately——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Unfortunately, that is part of a pattern of a candidate who will say anything to get elected. My opponent is throwing out the wild claim that he knows where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001 and that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. You might remember that discussion during our debates. I think this is unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking.

Our commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, recently wrote this about Tora Bora, quote, "The Senator's understanding of events doesn't square with reality." That's what the man knows what—who knows what he's talking about said. The general says that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for terrorists in Tora Bora and that intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, he said, quote, "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." He went on to talk about Tora Bora. The Senator said this: "I think we have been smart. I think the administration leadership has done it well, and we are on the right track." All I can say to this is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The security of our families is very important. And my opponent's record on national security has far deeper problems with just election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. He has a record. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just 1 year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his colleague from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. [*Laughter*] History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democrat Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt, the party of Harry Truman, the party of John Kennedy is rightly

remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and in hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he's replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore, and today I want to speak to every one of them here in the State of Michigan. If you believe America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child to help moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We lowered—we dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent to help our working families. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes. After-tax income in America is up by 10 percent since I've become the President.

We have overcome a lot. I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. Our economy was slowing. We had a recession. We had corporate scandals. And then the attacks on September the 11th cost us nearly a million jobs in the 3 months after those attacks.

But our economic policies are working. They've led us back to the path of growth. We're growing—our economy is growing faster than any in the major industrialized world. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. Michigan farmers are making a good living under the Bush administration. We've added more than 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. There is more work to be done to make sure this economy continues to grow so people in Michigan can find work, but one thing is certain: This economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has a very different view about your budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the higher child tax credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way over the last 3 years, the average American family would have been paying $2,000 more in Federal taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That may not sound like a lot to people in Washington. It's a heck of a lot for people living in Michigan.

You know, my opponent has been in the United States Senate for 20 years. And hear this fact: He voted for increased taxes 98 times. That's five times for every year he's been in the Senate—nearly five times. I would call that a predictable pattern. I'd call that a indicator. [*Laughter*] When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] The problem is you won't enjoy it. If he raises your taxes—as a matter of fact, here's another indicator. He's promised $2.2 trillion of new spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

And they said, "How are you going to pay for it? How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." Now, we have heard that before. Let me tell you two things wrong with that. One, most small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax. Ninety percent of small businesses are what they call Subchapter S corporations and sole proprietorships, and they pay tax at the individual income tax rate. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. And so when you start running up the top two income brackets, guess who you're taxing? You're taxing the job creators in America, and that makes no economic sense.

And secondly, by taxing the rich you raise about 600 to 800 billion dollars. So you can see there is a gap between that which he has promised and that which he can deliver. I would call it a tax gap. And guess who usually gets to fill the tax gap?

Audience member. We do!

The President. The good news is we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to carry Michigan and win a great victory.

The third clear choice in this election improves the quality of life for our families. A good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. As a candidate, I pledged to end the soft bigotry of low expectations in our schools. And as President, I have kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which is an historic achievement for public education. We are raising the standards in our schools. We've increased Federal spending, especially for poor students. But in return for an increase of Federal spending, we're now saying, "Show us whether or not a child can read or write, and add and subtract. Show us whether or not children are becoming literate. Show us whether or not we're ending that practice of just shuffling kids through school, year after year, without learning the basics."

You cannot solve a problem until you diagnose a problem, and we are diagnosing problems, and we're solving more and more problems, so that our children are learning to read and write. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not going to go back to the days of low expectations and mediocre results.

We will continue to improve life by making sure health care is affordable and available. To make sure health care is available, we will expand community health centers so the poor and the indigent can get good primary and preventative care. We will make sure our low-income—children for low-income family program for health care is fully subscribed.

To make sure health care is affordable, here are three commonsense ways to help the American family. First, we'll expand health savings accounts to help our small businesses and families have an affordable health care account that you manage and you call your own. Secondly, we will help our small businesses by allowing them to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. And thirdly, we will do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care and running good docs out of practice.

You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I am standing with the families of Michigan. I am standing with the docs of Michigan. I'm standing with the hospitals of Michigan. I am for real medical liability reform—now.

We have a difference of opinion when it comes to your health care. I don't know if you remember that debate when he—my opponent, when they asked him about his health care plan, looked straight in the camera, and he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." You know, I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with his health care plan. Eighty percent of the people would end up on a Government-run health program. See, if you increase Medicaid eligibility, it provides an incentive for many small businesses to drop private coverage because the Government will be providing coverage for their employees. That's moving people from the private sector to the public sector. And when the Government writes a check, the Government makes the rules. And when it comes to your health care, when the Government makes the rules, the Government starts making decisions for you and for your doctors. Federalizing health care is the wrong prescription for America's families.

In all we do to reform health care, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

And we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors and strengthen it for generations to come. I don't know if you remember the 2000 campaign, when they were running ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." They may be running some here in Michigan now for all I know, trying to scare our seniors again. As you're rounding up the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors that George W. did get elected, and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. Nobody is going to take away the Social Security checks of our seniors. And baby boomers like me, and like a couple others out there I see—[*laughter*]—we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether the Social Security system will be there when they need it. And that's why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own payroll account—some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account that will earn better interest, an account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach on the Social Security issue. He talks about protecting Social Security. But I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about this fact: He's the only candidate in the race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide. And when it comes to offering help for the next generation, he's offered nothing. The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I will bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen the Social Security system for generations to come.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping America's families strong. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. When Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and my predecessor, Bill Clinton, signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Reasonable people can find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortions. I proudly signed that bill into law. My opponent was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this good-hearted Nation to a culture of life.

At one point in this campaign you might remember that my opponent said the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I agree. I understand. I understand most American families do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The heart and soul of America is found in places like Oakland County, Michigan.

No, this election is an important election. It's about important choices, and the decision is in the best of hands. It is in the hands of the American people. I am optimistic about the future of this country. I believe so strongly in what we stand for, and I understand the strength of this country. It lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. That's the true strength of America.

You know, one of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea, and here's what Tom said. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During this campaign, my opponent has spent much of the campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

I see a day that's coming where America is more safe and our families are more secure, a day when this country is prosperous

in every corner of the land, a day in which every child can read and write and add and subtract, a day in which we defend the bedrock values that make our society such a compassionate, decent place.

When I campaigned across your State 4 years ago, I made this pledge, that if I got elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. at the Pontiac Silverdome. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Michael L. Williams, commissioner, Railroad Commission of Texas; Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele of Maryland; Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Saginaw, Michigan

October 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I got to tell me, you have lifted my spirits, for which I am grateful. It's good to be back in Saginaw. I'm grateful so many of you came out to say hello.

Listen, I'm traveling your State asking for the vote and asking for your help. It is close to voting day. We have a duty in our country to vote. In our free land, free citizens must vote. And so I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls, turn out our fellow Republicans, find independents who understand we have a better tomorrow ahead of us, and don't overlook discerning Democrats. Tell your fellow citizens that if they want a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

My only regret is that Laura is not here to see this fantastic crowd. She headed off to campaign today in Florida. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she said, "I'll marry you, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I will never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I'm sure some of you can relate to that. I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a strong, compassionate, great First Lady. Perhaps the most important reason why people ought to put me back in office is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He is doing a great job. Although, I admit, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You will be pleased I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to call Dave Camp my friend, and I know you're proud to call him Congressman. And I want to thank Terri Lynn Land for joining us, the secretary of state for the great State of Michigan. And I wish Myrah Kirkwood all the best in her run for the United States Congress. I want to thank Betsy DeVos and all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank the Saline Fiddlers. I want to thank the Saginaw Area Band. I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band for joining us. Thank you for entertaining this good crowd.

Most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank you for what you have done on behalf of my candidacy and what you're going to do. By working the phones, by getting people to—by reminding people of their duty to vote, by putting up the signs, by turning out that vote, there is no doubt in my mind, we will carry Michigan and win a great victory in November.

Five days from now, the people go to the polls. We are choosing the leader of our country at a time of great consequence to our Nation. We're at war against a terrorist enemy unlike any we have ever seen. We have much more to do to win a decisive victory against the terrorists. The most important duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows

uncertainty or weakness in these troubling times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Our economy is in the midst of change and challenge. It can be a great time of opportunity if we have the right policies that strengthen rather than stall our economic growth. We have much more to do to create jobs, to improve our children's education, to make health care available and affordable, and to strengthen Social Security for our seniors and for generations to come. And I am ready for the job.

My years as your President have confirmed some lessons and have taught me some new ones. A President must have a vision. A President must set goals and bring people together to achieve those goals. A President must surround himself with strong, capable people. And I have done so. A President must make America's priorities crystal-clear in this uncertain world. I've learned to expect the unexpected, because history can deliver sudden horror from a soft autumn sky. I found you better know what you believe or risk being tossed to-and-fro by the flattery of friends or the chorus of the critics.

I've been grateful for the lessons I have learned from my parents: Respect every person; do your best; and live every day to its fullest. I have been strengthened by my faith and humbled by its reminder that my life is part of a much bigger story. I've learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even when the cause is right. I've been reminded that the world looks to America for leadership and that it is crucial for an American President to be consistent.

Perhaps most of all, I've learned the American President must make decisions on principle, core convictions from which you must not waver. The issues vary; the challenges are different every day. Tactics and strategy must be flexible, but a President's convictions must be steady and true. As Presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan so clearly demonstrated, a President cannot blow in the wind. A President has to make tough decisions and stand by them.

A President must follow the—must not follow the path of the latest polls. A President must lead based on conviction and conscience. Especially in a time of war, mixed signals only confuse our friends, embolden our enemies. Mixed signals are the wrong signals for the American President to send.

When America chooses a President, you choose not just a set of positions on issues or a philosophy or record; you choose a human being who comes with strengths and weaknesses. One of the things I've learned about the Presidency is, whatever your strengths are, you're going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people are going to notice them. Sometimes I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. Sometimes I mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from my dad. [*Laughter*] But Americans have learned that when you disagree with me, at least you know what I believe and where I stand.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You cannot say that about my opponent. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry has taken a lot of different positions, but he rarely takes a stand. He's run a campaign of contradictions. I think it's fair to say consistency is not the Senator's strong suit. [*Laughter*] He was for the PATRIOT Act and the No Child Left Behind Act, until he was against key provisions of both of them. He voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq and then said I was wrong to use that force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I sent troops into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, he said it was the right decision. Now he says it was the "wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. During one of our debates, he said Saddam Hussein was a threat. And then a couple of answers later, he said there was no threat in Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Just last year, American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq needed $87 billion for body armor, hazard pay, vehicles, weapons, and bullets—necessary funding, funding that would keep a commitment we have made to our soldiers and their loved ones. They will have what is necessary to

complete their mission. Something the veterans in this crowd understand, the Government must support those in harm's way. And I say thanks to our veterans from the bottom of a grateful heart.

Back to the 87 billion. First Senator Kerry said, "It would be irresponsible to vote against the troops." That's what he said on TV, national TV. Then he did the irresponsible thing and voted against the funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, they asked him about that vote, and you might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when he said, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." Pressed further to explain his vote, he's given several explanations. One of the most interesting was this: "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

You have to wonder why my opponent has taken such different positions at different places and different times in this campaign. I think you'll find two reasons why. Senator Kerry changes positions because he's willing to say anything he thinks will help him politically at the time. And he does so to try to obscure a 20-year record, 20 years of out-of-the-mainstream votes. That leads to an inescapable conclusion. Senator Kerry has been wrong—on the wrong side of the defining national security and domestic policy debates for the last two decades. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Several times during the course of this campaign, the Senator has changed his positions for political convenience. The Senator recognized Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized force to remove him, until his Democratic opponent Howard Dean began gaining ground as an antiwar candidate. And then he decided he had to appeal to that wing of his party, so he voted against the troops—after voting to put them at risk in the first place. See, he looked at the polls and changed positions. The Senator was all for removing Saddam Hussein when we went into Baghdad. He was very supportive when we captured him. After all, the polls showed that that was very popular at the time. When the going got tough and when we faced determined opposition and things weren't quite so popular, the Senator suddenly wasn't quite so supportive. In fact, he changed his mind entirely, deciding it was the "wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's important for the citizens of Michigan to think about this. What does that lack of conviction say to our troops who are risking their lives in a vital cause? What does it say to our allies who have joined us in that cause? What does that lack of conviction signal to our enemies, that if you make things uncomfortable, if you stir up trouble, John Kerry will back off? And that's a very dangerous signal to send during this time.

This week Senator Kerry is again attacking the actions of our military in Iraq, with complete disregard for the facts. Senator Kerry will say anything to get elected. The Senator's willingness to trade principle for political convenience makes it clear that John Kerry is the wrong man for the wrong job at the wrong time.

And there's another reason the Senator changes positions. He doesn't want you to know where he really stands. [*Laughter*] He doesn't want you to know where he stands on national security, because he has a record of weakness. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry proposed cancellation of critical defense weapons systems and said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

Former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991. Senator Kerry voted against using force to liberate Kuwait. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East, possess the world's most dangerous weapons. History has shown that John Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator

Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budgets, cuts so extreme that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we have got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

When you are one Senator among 100, you can be wrong without consequence. But the President's opinion decides the security and the fate of our country. And while the Senator's 20-year record of votes is long, it's also lacking of significant reform or achievement. He talks about bringing new allies to the war against terror—if somehow countries that have not yet been involved might want to join what he calls the "wrong war." [*Laughter*] Yet he has no history of convincing even his colleagues in the United States Senate to join him on signature reforms or achievements.

The next 4 years, I will work with our friends and allies. We will strengthen our coalition, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The security of our country is at stake. Senator Kerry says September the 11th, in his words, "did not change him much at all." That's what he said.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And his policies make that clear. The Senator says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. He says his goal is to go back to the days of the 1990s when terrorism was seen as a "nuisance"——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——fought with subpoenas and cruise missiles.

Well, September the 11th changed my outlook for the world. It made it crystal-clear to me the dangers we face. A few days after the attacks, I went to Ground Zero, September 14th, 2001. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. The sights and sounds of that day are always in my mind. Workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." A man coming out of the rubble grabbed me by the arm. He looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking how to—thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

There are other things about his views and his ideas the Senator really doesn't want you to know about. You might remember the debate when they asked him about his health care plan. He looked straight in the camera and said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people end up, under his idea, on a Government plan. When you increase Medicaid eligibility, it means small businesses will likely stop writing insurance because the Government will provide the insurance. That moves people from the private sector to the public sector when it comes to health care. And see, when the Government starts paying the money, the Government starts writing the rules. And when the Government starts writing the rules when it comes to your health care, the Government starts making decisions for you and decisions for your doctors and rationing care. Senator Kerry's plan for health care for America is the wrong prescription.

We will make health care more affordable and available for our citizens. We will expand community health centers to help the poor and the indigent. We'll make sure our program for low-income children is fully subscribed. We'll expand health savings accounts to help our businesses and families with innovative ways to manage—so you can manage your own health care account. We understand small businesses provide important insurance to the workers, and yet, many small businesses are having trouble affording health care, so we'll allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do.

And we understand that these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care for small businesses, for patients, and they're running good doctors out of practice. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same

time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Michigan. I'm standing with the patients of Michigan. I am for medical liability reform—now.

This campaign, the Senator doesn't want you to know where he really stands on taxes. He's going to raise them. To be fair, raising taxes is one of the few things that he's been consistent about. You might say he's made a habit out of it. See, he's been in the United States Senate 20 years, and he's voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's five times for every year he's been in the Senate. I'd call it a predictable pattern, an early-warning indicator. [*Laughter*]

You know, when we reduced the taxes for our families by raising the child credit and doing something about the marriage penalty, he voted against it. He voted against that tax relief at a vital time. Plus, he's decided to raise $2.2 trillion * in new Federal spending. He's going to spend it. That's what he said. He said, "I'm going to spend 2.2 trillion new money," when you add up all his promises. He doesn't really want to clarify that. That's 2.2 trillion with a "T." That's a lot. That is a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

And so they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'm just going to tax the rich." Now, people in Saginaw, Michigan, have heard that before. You see, if you raise the top two brackets, it raises 600 to 800 billion dollars. That is short of the 2.2 trillion. That's called a tax gap. [*Laughter*] And guess who usually has to fill that tax gap?

Audience member. We do!

The President. Yes, you do. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Michigan and win a victory.

No, the Senator doesn't really want to talk about his record, and there is a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics, and he sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. I'm more than happy to travel our country talking about my record, talking about a record that has made America a stronger place and a safer place and a better place.

When you're rounding up the vote, remind people what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline, which foretold a recession. And then we had some corporate scandals, passed—we passed tough laws, and we have made it abundantly clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the attacks came, and they cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. I led the Congress to cut the taxes on the American people to encourage consumption and investment, to stimulate the small-business sector of our economy. And our policies are paying off. We're growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We have added 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. The farmers in Michigan are making a living. The small-business owners are alive and well. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. More minorities own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s.

I understand there are some people hurting in Michigan, but that's not a reason to go back to tax and spend. The best way to make sure people can find work is to continue to promote a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business economic policy, which is what we have done. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

When I ran—when I was running for President 4 years ago, I promised to do something about the public schools. I told the American people I was troubled by a system that would shuffle children through, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. I call that the soft bigotry of low expectations. So I promised to reform our system. I kept my word. We've increased spending, particularly for minority students and poor students. But in return, we've now

* White House correction.

said, "Show us whether or not a child can read and write and add and subtract." See, you can't solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And as a result of the system in place, the system that says we're going to set high standards for every child, we're diagnosing problems and we're solving them. Math and reading scores are up across this country. We are closing an achievement gap for minority students. And we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity and excuses for failure in our public schools.

When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. You might remember the old Medicare debates. They would call it "Mediscare" because politicians wouldn't talk about it. I came to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicare would pay thousands of dollars for the heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Now we've strengthened Medicare. We've modernized Medicare. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against that bill that provided prescription drug coverage for our seniors——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——even though AARP and other senior groups supported it. As your President the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we put in place for our seniors. We will keep our promise to America's seniors with modern medicine.

When I ran for President, I said we would help those who need help in America, we would help those who could not help themselves. I said Government should not discriminate against faith-based and community groups who provide compassionate care for the broken heart. And now our Government welcomes those groups as partners in meeting the needs of those who need hope and those who need help.

I said we would help the poor and the indigent with health care, and we've expanded community health centers all across this country, and we will continue to do so. We've doubled funding for medical research into new cures and diseases, just like I said I would do during the campaign. As we pursued threats around the world, as we have used our might to protect ourselves and to protect others, we have also delivered American compassion. We've dramatically increased funding to combat AIDS and to help developing countries who are making good governance decisions and investing in their future.

We're pursuing a forward strategy of freedom around the world. We're promoting democracy. I want you to tell your children about what has taken place in a brief period of time in this world. You know, it wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school in Afghanistan because the country was run by ideologues of hate called the Taliban. And if their mothers didn't toe the line, they would be pulled into the public squares and whipped and sometimes shot in a sports stadium. They were backward. The society was grim and dark. Because we acted to defend ourselves, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people in Afghanistan went to the polls to vote for a President. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

There will be elections in Iraq in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march. Liberty will transform societies. I believe everybody yearns to be free. I believe this not because freedom is America's gift to the world, I believe this because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The role of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. That is how I have led, and that is how I will continue to lead our great Nation. We will keep your taxes low so this economy continues to grow. We will work on the education reforms and take them to our high schools. We will expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families so more of our children can start their career with a college degree. We'll make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. You might remember the 2000 campaign. Perhaps the same thing is happening in this campaign. It's kind of the old, tired scare tactics. They said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors aren't going to get their checks." That's what they said 4 years ago. Please tell your friends and neighbors, George W. did get elected, and our seniors did get their checks. Our seniors will continue to get their checks. Baby boomers like me and a couple others out there I see—we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not a—Social Security will be available for them when they retire. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account that earns a better rate of return than the Social Security trust, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

Over the next 4 years, I'm going to work with Republicans and Democrats to do something about the Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It is a million pages long. We need to make the Tax Code easier to understand and more fair for the American people.

Over the next 4 years, I will defend the values that are important for our families and our Nation. Marriage and family are the foundations of our society, and we will keep them strong. I believe that this society must promote a culture of life. I was proud to sign the ban on partial-birth abortion. I stand and will continue to stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent and I differ on these issues. Look at his record. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act and voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said he—he said there would be a litmus test for his judges. And at one point in this campaign, he said that you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found in caring communities like Saginaw, Michigan.

Now, I'm looking forward to the rest of this campaign. I like talking about what we have done to make it clear to the American people I intend to do what I say I'm going to do during the next 4 years. I got a hopeful vision for this country. I see a better day coming. That stands in contrast with my opponent, who has offered a long litany of complaints without a significant record.

One of my favorite quotes that I hope helps you understand how I feel about our great country comes from a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During the course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much time talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

I see a prosperous America where people are able to realize their dreams. I see an education system that challenges our children so that no child is left behind. I see a compassionate health care system run by you, where doctors aren't being sued every day. I see a world that is free and therefore peaceful. I see the peace that we all long for our children and our grandchildren.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made you this pledge, that if I was elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. at the Dow Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Myrah Kirkwood, candidate for Congress in Michigan's Fifth Congressional District; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; the Saline Fiddlers, a student musical group from Saline High School, Saline, MI; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Dayton, Ohio

October 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for coming out today. You're lifting my spirits. I'm honored you're here. I have come back to the great city of Dayton, Ohio, to ask for your vote and ask for your help. We have a duty in our country to vote. I'm asking for you to remind your friends and neighbors of that duty. We have an obligation in a free society to show up to the polls.

I've come to Dayton to ask you to get our fellow Republicans to vote, to find independents to go to the polls, and don't overlook discerning Democrats like Mayor McKelvey from the great city of Youngstown, Ohio. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America for all of us, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

My regret is that Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. It's obviously your regret as well. [*Laughter*] So we were in the seventh grade together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And then we became reacquainted when she was a public school librarian. And I asked her to marry me, and she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "Okay, what is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she is not holding me to that promise. She is giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a strong, a warm, a compassionate First Lady. I love her dearly. And, as a matter of fact, just as we pulled into the parking lot I got a phone call from three other members of my family. Barbara and Jenna, our twins, are out campaigning, and guess who they're with? They're with old Number 41. That would be former President Bush. And they send their best to the good people of Dayton, Ohio.

And they send their best to my buddy, the Senator from Ohio, George Voinovich. I tell you, you're lucky to have a man of this caliber serving you in the United States Senate. What a fine American, and I hope you put him back in office with a resounding vote. Plus he married well.

I want to thank my friend George McKelvey, the—from Youngstown, Ohio. We had a rally there yesterday. A lot of people showed up to see the Mayor. [*Laughter*] They wanted to see their leader. I'm proud that George has stood up by me—by side—side by side with me. There's a lot of Democrats that are for my candidacy. There's a lot of people around this country who know that the Democrat Party has left them. And I welcome every Democrat's support. You are welcome on our team.

I want to thank the other United States Senator from Ohio for joining us today. Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran, are with us. Thanks, Mike, for coming. I know you're proud of Congressman Mike Turner. Mike, you're doing a great job. And my friend John Boehner is with us, Congressman John Boehner—and his wife, Debbie—the author of the No Child Left Behind Act in the House of Representatives.

I want to thank Chief Justice Tom Moyer for joining us today. Mr. Judge, thanks for being here. I want to thank your mayor, the mayor of Trotwood, Ohio, for joining us today. Thanks for coming, Don. I'm proud you're here. I want to thank all the local and State officials, all the candidates.

But most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank the grassroots activists, the people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls, the people doing all the hard work. I want to thank you for what you have done, and I want to thank you for what you're going to do. With your help, with your hard work in turning out that vote, there is no doubt in my mind we'll carry Ohio again and win a great victory on November the 2d.

Five days from today, the people of America will go to the polls. We're choosing the leader of our country at a time of great consequence in our world. We're at war against a terrorist enemy unlike any we have seen. We have much more to do to win a decisive victory in the war on terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in these troubled

times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Our economy is in the midst of change and challenge. It can be a time of great opportunity if we have the right policies to strengthen rather than stall our economic recovery. We have much more to do to improve our children's education, to make health care more accessible and affordable, to strengthen our Social Security for our children and our grandchildren. And I'm ready for the job.

My 4 years as your President have confirmed some lessons and have taught some new ones. A President must have a vision in order to lead this country. You cannot lead if you don't know where you're going. A President must set clear goals and bring people together to achieve those goals. A President must surround himself with smart and capable people who are willing to express their opinion. I have surrounded myself with smart and capable people.

A President must make America's priorities crystal-clear, especially in an uncertain world. I've learned to expect the unexpected, because history can deliver sudden horror from a soft autumn sky. I have found you better know what you believe or risk being tossed to-and-fro by the flattery of friends or the chorus of critics. I've been grateful for the lessons I've learned from my parents: Respect every person; do your best; live every day to its fullest. And I've been strengthened by my faith and humbled by its reminder that my life is part of a much bigger story.

I have learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even when the cause is right. I've been reminded that the world looks to America for leadership and that it is crucial for the American President to be consistent. I have learned America's President must base decisions on principle, core convictions from which you will never waver. The issues vary; the challenges are different every day in this job. Tactics and strategy must be flexible, but a President's convictions must be steady and true. As Presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan so clearly demonstrated, a President cannot blow in the wind. A President has to make the tough decisions and stand by them.

The President must not follow the path of the latest polls. The President must lead based on conviction and conscience. Especially at a time of war, mixed signals only confuse our friends, embolden our enemies. Mixed signals are the wrong signals for an American President to send.

When America chooses a President, you choose not just a set of positions on issues of philosophy or record; you choose a human being who comes with strengths and weaknesses. One of the things I've learned about the Presidency is, whatever your strengths are, you're going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people are going to notice them. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. Sometimes I mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from my dad. But Americans have learned this, that even when you disagree with me, at least you know what I believe and where I stand. And you cannot say that about my opponent.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry has taken a lot of different positions, but he rarely takes a stand. He has run a campaign of contradictions. I think it's fair to say that consistency has not been the Senator's long suit. [*Laughter*] He was for the PATRIOT Act and the No Child Left Behind Act—until he was against key provisions of both of them. He voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq, then said I was wrong to use that force. When I sent troops into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, he said it was the right decision. Now he says it was the "wrong war."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. During one of our debates, he said Saddam Hussein was a threat. Then a couple of answers later, he said there was no threat in Iraq. Just last year, American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq needed $87 billion to help them complete their missions. This was vital support. First, Senator Kerry said, "It would be irresponsible to vote against the troops." He said that on national TV. Then he did that irresponsible thing and he voted against the funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign. When they asked him about his vote, he said, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." He's given several explanations of that vote since then, but perhaps one of the most interesting is, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I will always stand with our troops. I want to thank the military families who have joined us today. And I want to thank the veterans who have set such a great example to those who wear the uniform.

Now, you have to wonder why the Senator has taken such different positions at different places and different times in this campaign. Well, let me give you two reasons. It's important for the people of Ohio to understand this. Senator Kerry changes positions because he's willing to say anything he thinks that will help him politically at the time. And he does so to try to obscure a 20-year trail of out-of-the-mainstream votes that leads to an inescapable conclusion: Senator Kerry has been on the wrong side of the defining national security and domestic policy debates of the last 2 years. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Several times during the course of the campaign, the Senator has changed his positions for political convenience. The Senator recognized Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized force to remove him, until his Democratic opponent, Howard Dean, began gaining ground as an antiwar candidate. The Senator decided he had to appeal to that wing of his party, so he voted against the troops—after voting to put them in risk in the first place.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator was all for removing Saddam Hussein when we went into Baghdad, and he was very supportive when we captured him. After all, the polls showed that he was—that that was very popular at the time. People liked that. When the going got tough and when we faced determined opposition and things weren't quite so popular, the Senator suddenly wasn't quite so supportive. In fact, he changed his mind entirely, saying that Iraq was the "wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. What does that lack of conviction say to our troops who are risking their lives in this vital cause? Think about what that says to our allies who have joined our cause. Think about what that says, that lack of conviction, say to our enemies, that if you make things uncomfortable, if you stir up trouble, John Kerry will back off. And that's a very dangerous signal in the world in which we live.

Just this week Senator Kerry showed his willingness to put politics ahead of facts and the truth. He criticized our military's handling of explosives in Iraq, when his own advisers admitted he didn't know what had happened. His spokesman has now had to acknowledge that the explosives may have been moved before our troops arrived. A President needs to get all the facts before jumping to politically motivated conclusions. The Senator's willingness to trade principle for political convenience makes it clear that John Kerry is the wrong man for the wrong job at the wrong time.

There's another reason the Senator changes positions. He doesn't want you to know where he stands. He has a history. He doesn't want you to know where he really stands on national security because he has a record of weakness. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry proposed cancellation of critical defense weapons systems and said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against using force to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator

Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, cuts so extreme that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right.

When you are one Senator among 100, you can be wrong without consequence. But the President's opinion decides the security and the fate of the American people.

We have a different point of view when it comes to your security. Senator Kerry says September the 11th did not change him much. That's what he said.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And his policies make that clear. The Senator says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. September the 11th changed me a lot. In the days after the attacks, I went to Ground Zero. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood where those buildings used to stand. I'll never forget that day, workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the man—I remember one person in particular, who grabbed me by the arm. His eyes were bloodshot, and he looked me square in the eye and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I've gotten up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

There are other things about my opponent's positions he doesn't want you to know. I don't know if you remember the debate—one of the debates, they were talking about health care. And he looked square in the camera and he said, "My plan—the Government doesn't have anything to do with it." [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people in his plan end up on a Government plan. You see, if you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, small businesses will drop coverage for their employees because the Government will provide the insurance. That's moving people from the private sector to the public sector. When the Government starts writing the checks, the Government starts making the rules. And when it comes to your health care, when the Government starts making the rules, the Government starts making your decisions, and they start deciding for the docs. Federal control of health care is the wrong prescription for American families.

I've got a better idea. We'll make sure health care is available and affordable. We'd take care of the poor and the indigent by expanding community health centers across this country. We'll help make sure low-income children are signed up for the health programs available for them. We're also going to help our families. We'll expand health savings accounts so small businesses and families can better afford insurance and manage their own account. We will allow small businesses to come together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do.

And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we're going to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine. I have met too many doctors, here in Ohio and elsewhere, too many ob-gyns that are getting run out of practice because these lawsuits are causing their premiums to go up. And that hurts the people of Ohio when that happens. I have met too many expectant moms who are worried about the quality of the health care for their baby. See, these lawsuits are making it hard for you to afford health care. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the patients of Ohio. I'm standing with the doctors of Ohio. I am for medical liability reform—now.

The Senator really doesn't want you to know where he stands on taxes, because he's going to raise them. Listen, to be fair, raising taxes is one of the few things that he has been consistent about. You might say he's made a habit of it. He's been in the Senate for 20 years. He's voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is five times for every year he's been in the Senate. I would call that a predictable pattern, a leading indicator. [*Laughter*] During the campaign, he's promised a lot of new spending, $2.2 trillion of new spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. They asked him how he's going to pay for it, and he said, "That's simple. We'll just tax the rich." Most small businesses in Ohio pay tax at the individual income tax. One of the reasons why people are finding work here is because the small-business sector of your economy is strong and getting stronger. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. And by raising the top two brackets, my opponent would be taxing the job creators of Ohio, and that's bad economic policy.

The other thing is, is that by raising the top brackets, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion. That is far short of 2.2 trillion. I would call that a tax gap. That would be the difference between what he has promised to spend and what he can deliver. Guess who usually gets to fill the tax gap? You do. But the good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Ohio and win nationally on November the 2d.

You know where I stand when it comes to taxes. When I campaigned for the Presidency in 2000, I said we're going to provide our families tax relief. I kept my word. We increased the child tax credit to help our families. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code should encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We provided help for our small businesses.

This economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger. We're growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The number of jobs have been increased by 1.9 million since August of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Ohio's farmers are making a living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in the State of Ohio. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. More minority families own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history.

I understand times are tough here in Ohio in certain parts of your State. I know that. That's why I've been coming to your State, listening to people, talking about how to make sure this economy continues to grow. The unemployment rate went from 6.3 percent to 6 percent last month. Ohio added 5,500 new jobs last month. We're on our way to recovery. And the question the Ohio people have got to answer: Who's got the plan to make sure this economy continues to grow? I do: Low taxes; less regulation; and tort reform.

When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in our public schools. And I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act. We are spending more money for Title I students, trying to help low-income students. But now we're asking the question, "Can you read and write and add and subtract?" See, in return for excess money, we want to know whether or not people are learning. We believe every child can learn. We believe everybody has got potential, and we expect every child to learn in America.

You cannot solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And now we're diagnosing, and we're beginning to solve them. Math and reading scores are going up. The achievement gap amongst minority students is closing in America. And we're not going to go back to the old days of low expectations and mediocrity in our schoolhouses.

When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage for our seniors. I kept my word. You might remember the old debates of Medicare. They called it "Mediscare." [*Laughter*] People weren't willing to really take on the issue. I took on the issue. I was joined by Senator Voinovich and Senator DeWine, Congressman Boehner, Congressman Turner. We go to Washington to do things for the people. Medicare needed to be strengthened. Medicare needed to be modernized. You see, Medicare would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair to

our seniors. We got the job done, and beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In a new term, I will defend the reforms we have put in place and keep our promise to our America's seniors.

And speaking about our seniors, let me talk about Social Security, now that you got me on a roll. [*Laughter*] When you're out gathering up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors that in the 2000 campaign, it was said that if George W. got elected, the seniors would not get their checks. I don't know if you remember that. It may be happening here in Ohio now. You remind them that George W. did get elected, and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, we'll probably get our checks.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be there for them when they retire. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. My opponent said he's going to protect Social Security, but remind your friends and neighbors, he voted eight times to tax Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he's offered nothing for the younger generation. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

Let me tell you what else we're going to do in a new term. We're going to simplify the Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It's a million pages thick. We're going to make it fair for our workers, fair for our business, and fair for America.

Now, there's more to do. I'm asking for your vote because I know where I want to lead this country. I see a more hopeful America. I want to work with you to make sure our education system fulfills its promise and to make sure health care is available and affordable without the Federal Government taking it over. I want to make sure we do our duty to younger generations of Americans, and I want to continue to work to spread freedom and liberty so the world is more peaceful.

I want you to understand what has taken place in a brief period of time, particularly the youngsters who are here. The Taliban ran Afghanistan, and young girls could not go to school because they had a dark vision of the world. And if their mothers did not toe their ideological line of hatred, they would be pulled in the public square and whipped and sometimes killed in a sports stadium. These people were barbaric people. Because we acted to defend ourselves, because we upheld doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," because we acted in our self-interest to defend ourselves and eradicated those Al Qaida training camps that were in Afghanistan, millions of people were able to go to the polls and vote for a President of Afghanistan. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Think about that.

There will be elections in Iraq. Think how far Iraq has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and we're better off for it. We believe that people want to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Over the next 4 years, we've got work to do to make sure our families are secure and prosperous and our children are educated. And we've also got work to do to defend the values that are important for our country. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment. I believe marriage and family are the foundations of our society. I believe in a culture of life in America. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. I will name judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent has a different view. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, and he voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The way I heard it, he says he's going to have a litmus test for his judges. He also went on to say that, one time in this campaign, that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found in caring communities like Dayton, Ohio.

I'm optimistic about the future of this country. I know we can overcome any problem that faces us, because I know the American people. I know the strength and courage and compassion of the people who live in this land.

You know, one of my favorite quotes is written by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." You know, in the course of this campaign, my opponent has been talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

And I see a great day coming for America. I see a hopeful day. And I see the fact that the hard work we've done is paying off. I see peace coming as well, peace for our children and our grandchildren.

You know, when I campaigned across your State, I made this pledge, that if I won in 2000, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at the Hara Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor George M. McKelvey of Youngstown, OH; Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer of the Supreme Court of Ohio; Mayor Donald K. McLaurin of Trotwood, OH; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Westlake, Ohio

October 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here today. I am so honored so many came out to say hello. You've lifted my spirits. I am here in Westlake, Ohio, asking for your vote and your help. I am asking you during the next couple of days to get on the telephone, to tell your friends and neighbors we have a duty in our free society to vote. We have an obligation to vote. Tell them they need to go to the polls, and when you get them headed to the polls, tell them that if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I am so honored you are here. My only regret on this beautiful day is that Laura is not here to see the size of this crowd.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. That is generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] "Why didn't you stay at home and send her?" [*Laughter*] I don't know if you know this or not, but Laura and I went to the seventh grade together, San Jacinto Junior High. By the way, she went to the same high school at the same time that Tommy Franks did, in Midland, Texas. He's older, and she's prettier. [*Laughter*] And so, I met her again—we became reacquainted—and she was a public school librarian when I did so. And she said—I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I will never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "You got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches—she's speaking in Florida today—and when she does, the American people see a strong, compassionate, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I readily concede he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I did not pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of his experience, and he is getting the job done for the American people.

I'm proud and I am honored to be supported by General Tommy Franks. America is safer and the world is better off because of the leadership of this fine American. God bless you, Tommy. And I'm proud to be here with Senator Bob Dole and all the retired officers who are on this stage who represent

hundreds of people, former military leaders who are supporting my candidacy. It means a lot. It means a lot to be standing on the stage with people who have served our country so courageously. Thank you all for coming today, and thank you for your support.

I've been traveling today with a fine United States Senator in George Voinovich. Send him back to Washington. He's doing a great job for you. And so is Mike DeWine. I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him United States Senator.

I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Jennette Bradley. I want to thank Mayor Hruby for joining us. And guess who else is with us today, a buddy of mine I've been traveling with across the State of Ohio, the Democrat mayor of Youngstown, Ohio, George McKelvey. He represents a lot of Democrats that are supporting my candidacy. There are a lot of people who understand and remember the great Democrat tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy, of standing strong in times of crisis. As the mayor puts it, he didn't leave the Democrat Party; the Democrat Party under John Kerry left him. And I welcome every Democrat to my campaign, and I'm honored you're here.

I want to thank all the State and local officials. I appreciate so very much the Fraternal Order of Police folks who are here today. I want to thank you for the endorsement of my candidacy for President.

I know the great Cleveland Indian, Bob Feller, is with us today. I'm honored you're here. I appreciate my friend Sammy Kershaw for being here today. Thank you, Sammy and Lorrie Morgan, his wife, for coming; thanks for entertaining everybody.

But most of all, thank you all. I'm here to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do over the next 5 days. Get on that phone. Tell your friends and neighbors to vote. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory on November the 2nd.

When people go to the polls, we'll be choosing the leader of our country at a time of great consequence in our world. We're at war against the terrorist enemy unlike any we have seen. We have much more to do to win this war on terror. The primary job of the President of the United States is to protect the American people. If America shows any uncertainty or weakness in these troubling times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Our economy is in the midst of change and challenge. It can be a time of great opportunity if we have the right policies to strengthen, rather than stall, the economic recovery. We have more to do to make sure people can find work in places like Ohio, more to do to improve our children's education, more to do to make sure health care is available and affordable, more to do to strengthen Social Security for a generation to come, and I am ready for the job.

My 4 years as your President have confirmed some lessons and taught me some new ones. The President must have a vision. You must understand where you're going in order to lead this Nation. A President must set clear goals and bring people together to achieve those goals. A President must surround himself with good, capable, strong people, and I have done so.

I have learned to expect the unexpected. History can deliver sudden horror from a soft autumn sky. I've found you better know what you believe or you risk being tossed to-and-fro by the flattery of friends or the chorus of the critics. I've been grateful for the lessons I've learned from my parents, respect every person, do your best, live every day to its fullest. I have been strengthened by my faith and humbled by its reminder that my life is part of a much bigger story.

I have learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even when the cause is right. I've been reminded that the world looks to America for leadership and that it is crucial for America's President to be consistent. I've learned America's President must base decisions on principle, core convictions from which you will not waver. The issues vary; the challenges are different every day as your President. Tactics and strategy will be flexible, but a President's convictions must be steady, and they must be true.

As Presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan so

clearly demonstrated, a President cannot blow in the wind. A President has to make tough decisions and stand by them. That is how I have led our country, and that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The President must not follow the path of the latest polls. The President must lead based on conviction and conscience. Especially in a time of war, mixed signals only confuse our friends, embolden our enemies. Mixed signals are the wrong signals for an American President to send.

When America chooses a President, you choose not just a set of positions on issues or a philosophy or record; you choose a human being who comes with strengths and weaknesses. One of the things I've learned about the Presidency is whatever your strengths are, you are going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people are going to notice them. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I mangle the English language. I get that from my father. [*Laughter*] But Americans have learned that even when you disagree with me, at least you know what I believe and where I stand.

You cannot say that about my opponent. Senator Kerry has taken a lot of different positions, but he rarely takes a stand. He has run a campaign of contradictions. I think it's fair to say consistency has not been the Senator's strong suit. He was for the PATRIOT Act and the No Child Left Behind Act until he was against key provisions of both of them. He voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq and then said I was wrong to use that force. When I sent troops to Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, he said it was the right decision. Now he says it's the wrong war. During one of our debates, he said Saddam Hussein was a threat. Then a couple of answers later, he said there was no threat in Iraq.

This last year, American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq needed $87 billion to support them in their missions. First, Senator Kerry said on national TV, "It would be irresponsible to vote against the troops." Then he did that irresponsible thing and voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when they asked him about that vote, when he said this: "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." I haven't spent nearly as much time in these parts as you have, but I think you're going to have trouble finding anybody in Westlake who talks that way.

He's given a lot of answers about that vote. One of the most interesting ones of all is when he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

You have to wonder why he's taken such dramatically different positions in different places in different times in this campaign. Well, here's two reasons why, and it's important for the Ohio voters to understand this. Senator Kerry changes positions because he's willing to say anything he thinks will help him politically at the time. And he does so to try to obscure a 20-year record of out-of-the-mainstream votes that leads to this conclusion: Senator Kerry has been on the wrong side of defining national security and domestic policy debates for the last two decades. That is his record. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Several times during the course of this campaign, the Senator has changed his position for political convenience. The Senator recognized Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force, until his Democratic opponent Howard Dean began gaining ground as an antiwar candidate. The Senator decided he had to appeal to that wing of his party. So he voted against the troops after voting to put them at risk in the first place. The Senator was all for removing Saddam Hussein when we went into Baghdad and very supportive when we captured him. After all, the polls showed that was popular at the time. [*Laughter*] When the going got tough, when we faced determined opposition and things were not quite so popular, the Senator suddenly wasn't quite so supportive. In fact, he changed his mind entirely, deciding it was

the "wrong war at the wrong place and the wrong time."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The voters of Ohio must ask these questions. What does that lack of conviction say to our troops who are risking their lives in the vital cause? What does it say to our allies who have joined that cause? And what does his lack of conviction signal to our enemies? That if you make things uncomfortable, if you stir up trouble, John Kerry will back off. And that's a very dangerous signal in a world of grave threats. The President must be consistent. The President must stand for something.

Just this week, Senator Kerry showed his willingness to put politics ahead of the facts and the truth. He criticized our military's handling of explosives in Iraq, when his own advisers admitted he did not know what had happened. His spokesman has now had to acknowledge that the explosives may have been moved before our troops ever arrived. A President needs to get all the facts before jumping to politically motivated conclusions. The Senator's willingness to trade principle for political convenience makes it clear that John Kerry is the wrong man for the wrong job at the wrong time.

And there's another reason why the Senator changes positions. He doesn't want you to know where he really stands. He doesn't want you to know where he stands on national security because he has a record of weakness. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against using force to liberate Kuwait. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong, and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, cuts so extreme that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—[*laughter*]—Senator Kennedy was right. When you are one Senator among 100, you can be wrong without consequence. The President's opinion—the President's decision decides the security and the fate of our country.

My opponent and I have a different view about how to protect you, about how to make this country secure. He's got a limited, narrow view of the war on terror. Senator Kerry said September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Those are his words, not mine. And his policies make that clear. The Senator says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My outlook was changed by September the 11th. I clearly see the threats that we face. A few days after the attack, I stood where the buildings fell. I'll never forget the evil of the enemy and the suffering of our people. I remember that day—clearly remember that day. I remember the sights and sounds. I remember the workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember looking in the eyes of a man coming out of that rubble who said to me, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I've waken up every morning trying to figure out how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

There are other things about my opponent's views he doesn't want you to know. I don't know if you remember that in one of those debates. He looked square in the camera when they asked him about his health care plan, and he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with his health care plan. Eighty percent of the people would end up on Government insurance. If you increase the Medicaid limits, it provides an incentives for small businesses not to provide insurance for their employees, because

the Government is going to provide insurance for their employees. You're moving people from the private sector to the Government when it comes to health insurance, and when the Government writes the checks, the Government makes the rules. And when it comes to your health care, when the Government makes the rules, the Government starts making decisions for you and starts deciding for your doctors. The wrong prescription for our families' health care is the Federal control of health care.

I have got a better idea. We'll take care of the poor and the indigent through community health centers. We'll make sure low-income children are fully subscribed into the health programs aimed for them. I understand that most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can do. We'll expand health savings accounts to help our small businesses and our families. And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we will do something about the junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice and running your bills up.

I was in Canton a while ago and met obgyns that could no longer deliver babies. They had to get out of practice because these lawsuits had run their insurance up so high they couldn't afford to stay in practice. I've met too many women around our country who are worried about their baby. They're worried that they can't get the quality of health care that they need. Too many people are driving too far to get good health care because these lawsuits are ruining medicine, as far as I'm concerned. You can't be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Ohio. I'm standing with the patients of Ohio. We are for medical liability reform.

The Senator doesn't want you to really know where he stands on taxes, because he's going to raise them. Listen, to be fair, raising taxes is one of the view things that he has been consistent about. [*Laughter*] You might say he's made a habit out of it. He's been in the Senate 90—he's been in Senate 20 years, and he's voted to raise your taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's five times every year he's been in the Senate. I would call that a predictable pattern—[*laughter*]—a leading indicator—tells you what he thinks about your wallet. He's also proposed $2.2 trillion in new spending. That's a lot. That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he threw out that same old tired line, you know, "We're just going to tax the rich." Well, the problem is, is that by running up the top two brackets you raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars, and that's far short of the 2.2 trillion worth of promises. I would call that a tax gap. That would be the gap between what he's promised and what he can deliver. And guess who usually fills the tax gap.

Audience member. We do!

The President. The good news is we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to carry Ohio and win on November the 2d.

The Senator's record is clear. There is a mainstream in American politics, and he sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so. I am glad to talk about my record. You know, when I ran for office, I said we would cut the taxes on the American people, and I kept my word. We increased the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe that the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We created a 10-percent bracket to help our working families. We cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. We're helping our small businesses, and our economic policies are paying off. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

You remind your friends and neighbors, when you're out gathering the vote, what we have been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC, the stock market was in serious decline. That foretold a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. We passed good law that make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty

in the boardrooms of America. And finally, those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our plans are working. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. More minorities own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history. Ohio's farmers are making a living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in the State of Ohio. Our small businesses are creating jobs.

I know there's pockets of problems here in this State. I understand that. I've been traveling your State. I know it well. But I want to remind you, in the month of September, the unemployment rate went from 6.3 percent to 6 percent in the State of Ohio. You added 5,500 new jobs in this State. We're making progress. We're going forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

No, I'm proud to run on my record. When I campaigned for President 4 years ago, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in our public schools. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which is a fine piece of legislation. In return for increased Federal spending, we're now measuring. You know why? Because we believe every child can learn in America, and we expect every school to teach. You cannot solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem, and we're now diagnosing problems all across America, and our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. The math scores are up. The English scores are up. We're closing an achievement gap among minority students, and we are not going to back to the day of low standards and mediocrity in our classrooms.

When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage for our seniors. I kept my word. Medicine was changing, and Medicare wasn't. We pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. I brought Republicans and Democrats together. We have strengthened and modernized Medicare. Beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Now that you've got me on a roll, let me talk about Social Security. [*Laughter*] I promised our seniors we would keep the promise of Social Security, and we did. In the 2000 campaign, I remember those—some of those television ads, the fliers that went out to our seniors that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors are not going to get their checks." You might remember those, the shameless scare tactics. Well, George W. did get elected, and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me—I see a few of us out there—don't admit it—[*laughter*]—we're going to get our checks.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether Social Security will be there for them when they need it. That's why I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account they call their own, that the Government cannot take away.

During the debate, I remember my opponent standing up there saying, well, he's going to protect Social Security. But what he forgot to tell you was, he voted eight times to raise taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The good thing about a campaign is, you can run, but you cannot hide.

He also offered nothing for the younger generation. The job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I will bring Republicans and Democrats together to make sure the Social Security system is strengthened for generations to come.

There's more work to be done. I'm here to ask for the vote and let you know I want to make sure education systems continue to work. We'll expand the high standards to our high schools and expand Pell grants for low- and middle-income families so more children can start their career with a college degree. We'll continue to expand our economy and create an environment for the entrepreneur to flourish, by keeping your taxes low and

doing something about regulations and lawsuits. We're going to make sure that the compassion of America continues to be unleashed through our faith-based and community-based initiatives. And we'll work hard to make sure this country is secure, by not only chasing the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home but by spreading freedom and liberty.

I want to thank you all for bringing your children here today. I want to tell the children something, and I hope parents reinforce this. We—we're changing the world because of our belief in liberty. It wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan where young girls could not go to school. Think about a society that way. Think about how barbaric and backward the Taliban were. And if their mothers didn't toe their ideological line of hatred, they would be pulled in the public square and whipped; some cases, killed in a sports stadium.

We acted in our own self-interest in Afghanistan. We acted to uphold a doctrine that I explained to the world, that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." When the President says something, he needs to speak clearly and mean what he says in order to keep the peace. And I meant what I said, and Tommy knew I meant what I said. We acted in our interest and removed the Taliban—Al Qaida can no longer train there—but in so doing, millions of people voted in a Presidential election. The first voter in the Afghanistan Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman. Think about that. Think about how that society has gone from darkness to light because of freedom.

Iraq will hold elections in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and America is more secure because of it. And freedom will stay on the march so long as I am your President. I believe everybody yearns to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Over the next 4 years, we will work to protect and defend the values that make our country such a unique place. I stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for a culture of life in which every being matters and every person counts. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. I stand strongly for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society.

My opponent and I disagreed on these issues. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, at one time during this campaign, he actually said he thought you could find the values—find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found right here in places like Westlake, Ohio.

It's an important election. I want to thank you all for coming out and giving me a chance to encourage you to vote and to work the crowd, work the folks—work the folks in your neighborhood and communities—community centers and your coffee shops. Tell the people we have an obligation, and when you're talking to them, tell them I see such a bright future for America. I see a great day ahead for our citizens.

One of my favorite quotes is written by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. Here's what he said. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." The course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of the time talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that's coming, a better day for all Americans, a prosperous America, an educated America, a compassionate America, and a peaceful world that we all want.

You know, when I campaigned across your State 4 years ago, I made you this pledge, that if I got elected, I would uphold the honor and the integrity of the office. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. at the Westlake Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; former Senator Bob Dole; Mayor Jerry N. Hruby of Brecksville, OH; and Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller.

Remarks in Yardley, Pennsylvania

October 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I have had a fabulous day today. What a great way to end it. Thanks for lifting my spirits. It is such an honor to be back in Bucks County.

First, I want to thank Ruth Wright, who's the owner of this beautiful farm. And I want to thank her for enrolling the land in the Conservation Reserve Program, to help preserve the open spaces of Bucks County. What a great citizen. What a fantastic contribution to this beautiful part of the world. Ms. Wright, we are honored that you let us all come here. Some of us will stay over afterwards and help clean up. [*Laughter*] I, of course, will be going to another State to keep putting the message out.

I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. We're coming down the stretch. There's not many days left. We have a duty in this country to vote, and I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. Tell your friends and neighbors that in a free society, all of us have an obligation to participate in our democracy. Make sure our fellow Republicans get the word. Make sure independents get the word. And don't overlook discerning Democrats. They too want what we want, which is a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America.

I am sorry that Laura is not with me this evening.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That is generally the reaction. I take it like, "Why didn't you stay home and send her?" [*Laughter*] What a fabulous woman she is. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, but make me a promise." I said, "What is the promise?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She was in Florida today giving speeches. When the people see Laura Bush give a speech, they see a strong, compassionate, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I do not want to offend anybody here who's follically challenged, but I admit my runningmate does not have the best hairdo in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He is getting the job done for the American people.

I'm honored to be introduced by Chad Lewis. No, I know you know him as a fine football player. Michele knows him as a loving dad and a great husband. I know him as a man of character. I'm proud to be standing on stage with Chad, and I want to thank the other Eagles for coming here today. I'm honored you all are here. Congratulations on a great season. Just don't be too tough on the Cowboys. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Arlen Specter for being here today. I hope you put him back in for 6 more years. And I enjoy the other Senator from Pennsylvania, a good friend of mine, I know a friend of yours, Rick Santorum.

I'm a little angry at your Congressman. He's leaving. I've enjoyed working with Jim Greenwood. He cares deeply about the people of Pennsylvania and Bucks County. He has done a fine job as a Member of the United States Congress, and I wish him all the best in this new venture. And I urge you to support Mike Fitzpatrick to take his place.

I welcome Melissa Brown here. She too is running for the United States Congress from the Thirteenth Congressional District. I wish Melissa all the best. I want to thank all the other candidates who are here. I appreciate the entertainers who are here.

Most of all, I thank you all for coming. Thanks for putting up the signs. Thanks for making the phone calls. Thanks for working hard to turn out such a big crowd. I want to thank you for what you're going to do. Turn out the vote—no doubt in my mind,

we can carry and will carry Pennsylvania and win a victory on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And one other person I want to recognize, and that's Sam Evans. Sam Evans is 101 years young. He is with us tonight. He is the chairman of the American Foundation of Negro Affairs. I am proud to have his support. Mr. Evans, God bless you, and thanks for coming.

The election comes down to some clear choices for America's families, and that's what I'm here to talk about. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they are determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war on terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in these troubled times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're strengthening the protections of our homeland. The former Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Ridge, is doing a great job as the Secretary of Homeland Security. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army works, and we'll keep it an all-volunteer army. We are relentless. We are determined. We are staying on the offense against these terrorists so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we're making progress. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. And at the same time, we use all our assets to protect ourselves.

We've got one other asset, and that's our deep belief in liberty and freedom. We believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. I want you to tell your children and grandchildren about the astonishing events that are taking place.

In a short period of time, Afghanistan has gone from a country ruled by barbarians who would not let young girls go to school. And if their mothers didn't toe their line of hatred, they were taken into the public squares and whipped and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. Because we defended ourselves, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people voted in a Presidential election in Afghanistan. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Because of freedom, that society has gone from darkness to light, and America is more secure to have Afghanistan as an ally in the war on terror.

Iraq will hold Presidential elections in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers, from the days of a brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein. Freedom is on the march. The world is changing because of our deep belief in freedom. We believe everybody wants to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, you know where I stand, and you know where I'm going to lead this country. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people, and I will always support the men and women who wear our uniform.

I see a sign that says "Moms of Military." I want to thank the families who are here—the families of our military who are here for their sacrifices. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to assure those who wear the uniform and their loved ones, we will make sure they

have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked the Congress for support—to support our men and women in harm's way. We asked for $87 billion, and it was necessary. It was important funding.

The bipartisan support for that measure was overwhelming. Republicans and Democrats both understood the need to support our troops in harm's way. It was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. As you're out gathering up the vote, as you find people who wonder about which candidate can lead, you might remind them of this startling statistic: Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and voted against providing the funding necessary to support our troops in combat—only 4 out of 100—4 Members of the Senate, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him why, and you might remember the famous quote of the 2004 campaign, when he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." He's given several explanations since then about that vote. Perhaps the most interesting and telling of all is when he finally said, "Well, the whole matter was a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less secure. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—[*laughter*]—Senator Kennedy was right.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay and price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. And today, here in the great State of Pennsylvania, I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I am asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The security of our families is at stake. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all. That's what he said. His policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

September the 11th changed me, and changed my outlook. I'll never forget the day that I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers, September the 14th, 2001. I'll never forget the sights and sounds of that day, the workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the firefighter or police officer, I'm not sure which one, who'd come out of the rubble. He grabbed me by the arm. He looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let

me down." Ever since that morning, I've gotten up thinking about how to best protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child to help the moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent so working families can take—keep more of their paychecks. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays income taxes. And real after-tax income, the money you have in your pocket, is up by about 10 percent since I've been your President.

When you're out gathering the vote, remind people about what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. It foretold a recession that we went through. And then we had some corporate scandals. But we acted. We passed good legislation that made it abundantly clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. By stimulating consumption and increasing investment, this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Think about what's taken place. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America. More minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. Pennsylvania farmers, like farmers everywhere, are making a good living under the Bush administration. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America.

We've added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in Pennsylvania is 5.3 percent. This economy is moving forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

My opponent has a different plan for your family's budget. He's going to take a big chunk out of it. You remind your friends and neighbors about these facts. He voted against the child—increasing the child credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, the average American family would be paying 2,000 more in Federal income taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That probably doesn't seem like a lot to people in Washington. It's a lot to people who are trying to make ends meet in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It matters to families right here in this part of the world.

He's been in the United States Senate 20 years, and he's voted for higher taxes 98 times. That is five times a year. I would call that a predictable pattern, a leading indicator. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*]

I want you to couple that fact with this one: He's proposed about $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot. That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] And so they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he threw out that same old tired line we've heard before. He's going to tax the rich.

Let me tell you two things about that. One, most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S's. They pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. By running up the top two brackets, you're taxing the job creators. You're taking money out of the coffers of small businesses, and that is bad economic policy.

This may interest you as well. By raising the top two brackets, by taxing the rich, you raise about 600 billion to 800 billion dollars. That is far short of the 2.2 trillion that he had promised. That's what we call a tax gap. That's the difference between what's promised and what's delivered. Guess who usually fills the tax gap? You do. But the good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Pennsylvania and win on November the 2d.

The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A

good education and quality health care are important to our families. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. I signed the No Child Left Behind Act and proudly so. We're raising the standards. We're spending more money, but in return, we're asking for results. We believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach.

You cannot solve a problem until you diagnose the problem, and we're now diagnosing problems and we're solving them. Test scores are up in reading and math. We're closing an achievement gap for minority students all across America. And we're not going to go back to the days of low standards and mediocrity in our classrooms.

We'll continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and available. We'll make it available by making sure the poor and the indigent are able to get care in community health centers, places where people can get good preventative care and good primary care without burdening the emergency rooms of your local hospitals. We'll make sure that children of low-income families are—subscribe to the programs aimed to help them, to make sure health care is affordable.

We'll help our small businesses. Small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will expand health savings accounts to help our small-business owners and families afford health insurance and manage their own health care plans.

To make sure health care is available and affordable in a State like Pennsylvania and others, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. We have a problem in this Nation when it comes to medical liability. There are too many lawsuits. I have met too many ob-gyns from the State of Pennsylvania who are being driven out of practice because their premiums are so high because of the lawsuits. And I, unfortunately, have met too many patients of ob-gyns who are deeply concerned about the quality of health care for not only the mom but the baby. This is a national problem.

You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times in the United States Senate. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Pennsylvania. I'm standing with the patients of Pennsylvania. I am for real medical liability reform.

My opponent proposed a plan. You might remember, at one of our debates, he looked straight in the camera and he said about his plan, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government's got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people in this plan will end up on a Government plan. If you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, it is likely small-business owners will stop providing insurance for their employees because the Government will cover them. That's moving people from the private sector to the public sector when it comes to health care. And when the Government writes the checks, the Government makes the rules. And when the Government starts making the rules for your family's health care, they start making decisions for you. And they make decision for the docs. And they start making decisions on rationing of care.

Countries that have tried centralized health care can't get away from it quick enough. The wrong prescription for American families is to federalize health care in America. In all we do to make sure health care is available and affordable, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word.

We reformed Medicare. The system need to be fixed. We would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. And that was not fair to our seniors, and it certainly wasn't fair to the taxpayers. And so we modernized Medicare. I brought Republicans and Democrats together. I proudly signed the Medicare bill. And beginning in 2006, all seniors in America will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. In the 2000 campaign, I remember some of those ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors won't get their checks." You might remember those. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people George W. got elected, and the seniors got their checks. Those scare tactics are not going to work in 2004. They're too old, and they're too tired. Seniors will always get their checks. Baby boomers like me, like some of you, are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether the Social Security system will be there when they retire, and that's why I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He said he's going to protect Social Security, but tell your friends and neighbors about this fact: He voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And when it comes to the next generation, he has offered no reform. See, the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring people together to strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping a family strong. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. And I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion.

My opponent has taken a different position. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. And at one point in this campaign, he actually said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's what he said. Most Americans do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The truth of the matter is, the heart and soul of America is found in communities in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

I'm running for a reason. I see clearly where this country needs to go.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I thank you all. I know where I want to lead us. You know, one of my favorite quotes is from a fellow Texan named Tom Lea, and he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." The course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of it talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that's coming.

I'm talking about a day in which our families are able to realize their dreams for their children. I'm talking about a day where prosperity reaches every corner of America, a day in which every school sets high standards so every child can realize the great promise of America. I'm talking about a day when we achieve the peace we all desperately want.

When I campaigned across Pennsylvania 4 years ago, I made this pledge, that I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. at Broadmeadows Farm. In his remarks, he referred to professional football player Chad Lewis and his wife, Michele; Mike Fitzpatrick, candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on Signing the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005

October 28, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4200, the "Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005." The Act authorizes funding for defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, and for national security-related energy programs.

Section 326 of the Act, amending sections 3551, 3552, and 3553 of title 31, United States Code, purports to require an executive branch official to file with the Comptroller General a protest of a proposed contract for private sector performance of agency functions previously performed at higher cost by Federal employees, whenever a majority of those Federal employees so requests, unless the official determines, free from any administrative review, that no reasonable basis exists for the protest. The executive branch shall construe section 326 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, including the making of determinations under section 326.

Section 574 of the Act amends sections 3037, 5046, 5148, and 8037 of title 10, United States Code, to prohibit Department of Defense personnel from interfering with the ability of a military department judge advocate general, and the staff judge advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to give independent legal advice to the head of a military department or chief of a military service or with the ability of judge advocates assigned to military units to give independent legal advice to unit commanders. The executive branch shall construe section 574 in a manner consistent with: (1) the President's constitutional authorities to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, to supervise the unitary executive branch, and as Commander in Chief; (2) the statutory grant to the Secretary of Defense of authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (10 U.S.C. 113(b)); (3) the exercise of statutory authority by the Attorney General (28 U.S.C. 512 and 513) and the general counsel of the Department of Defense as its chief legal officer (10 U.S.C. 140) to render legal opinions that bind all civilian and military attorneys within the Department of Defense; and (4) the exercise of authority under the statutes (10 U.S.C. 3019, 5019, and 8019) by which the heads of the military departments may prescribe the functions of their respective general counsels.

The executive branch shall construe section 1021, purporting to place restrictions on the use of the U.S. Armed Forces in certain operations, and sections 1092 and 1205, relating to captured personnel and to contractor support personnel, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

Section 1203 of the Act creates a Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, under the joint authority of the Secretaries of State and Defense, as a successor to the Inspector General of the Coalition Provisional Authority under title III of Public Law 108–106. Title III as amended by section 1203 shall be construed in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, to supervise the unitary executive branch, and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The Special Inspector General shall refrain from initiating, carrying out, or completing an audit or investigation, or from issuing a subpoena, which requires access to sensitive operation plans, intelligence matters, counter-intelligence matters, ongoing criminal investigations by administrative units of the Department of Defense related to national security, or other matters the disclosure of which would constitute a serious threat to national security. The Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense jointly may make exceptions to the foregoing direction in the public interest.

The executive branch shall construe as advisory section 1207(b)(1) of the Act, which purports to direct an executive branch official to use the U.S. voice and vote in an international organization to achieve specified foreign policy objectives, as any other construction would impermissibly interfere with the President's constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs and supervise the unitary executive branch. The executive branch also shall construe the phrase "generally recognized principles of international law" in sections 1402(c) and 1406(b) to refer to customary international law as determined by the President for the Nation, as is consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs.

The executive branch shall construe section 3147 of the Act, relating to availability of certain funds if the Government decides to settle certain lawsuits, in a manner consistent with the Constitution's commitment to the President of the executive power and the authority to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, including through litigation and decisions whether to settle litigation.

Several provisions of the Act, including sections 315, 343(2) amending section 391 of Public Law 105–85, 506(b), 517(c), 571(b), 574(d)(8), 576(c), 577(c), 643(c) and (e), 651(g)(2), 666(c), 841(c), 3114(d)(2), and 3142(c) call for executive branch officials to submit to the Congress proposals for legislation. The executive branch shall implement these provisions in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient. Also, the executive branch shall construe section 1511(d) of the Act, which purports to make consultation with specified Members of Congress a precondition to the execution of the law, as calling for, but not mandating such consultation, as is consistent with the Constitution's provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

A number of provisions of the Act, including sections 112(b)(6), 213(c), 513(e)(1), 912(d), 1021(f), 1022(b), 1042, 1047, 1202, 1204, 1207(c) and (d)(2), 1208, 1214, and 3166(a) amending section 3624 in Public Law 106–398, call for the executive branch to furnish information to the Congress, a legislative agent, or other entities on various subjects. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

Section 3161 expands the categories of atomic weapons industry employees who may receive direct compensation from the United States for their work-related illnesses. As a result, some claimants from the private sector who have occupationally caused asbestos-related diseases may be able to receive direct Federal compensation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act Program. As a general matter, Federal taxpayers should bear no additional burdens arising from the tort liabilities of private sector defendants, including contractors of the United States. The limited extension of Federal responsibility here is unique because it is solely a replacement for no-fault workers' compensation payments not otherwise available, in the unique situation in which the Federal Government may have encouraged its contractors to resist workers' compensation claims brought by atomic weapons industry employees with occupational illnesses.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 28, 2004.

NOTE: At the time of publication, H.R. 4200, approved October 28, had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register in time for assignment of a Public Law number. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29. An original was not available for the verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks in Manchester, New Hampshire

October 29, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. We are honored you are here. Thanks for being here today. You've lifted our spirits. And with your help, we'll carry New Hampshire and win a great victory next Tuesday.

I want to thank my friends Senator Judd Gregg and Kathy. I want to thank Senator Sununu, Congressman Bradley, Congressman Bass, Governor Benson—put him back in. Put Gregg back in too. Most of all, thank you for coming.

Laura and I are thrilled you are here. You know, I'm here to tell the people of New Hampshire, you need to put me back in for a reason. Perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I love her dearly. She is a great First Lady.

In the final 4 days of this historic campaign, I'm taking my vision of a more hopeful America directly to the people of this country. That's what I've come to New Hampshire about, to talk about a hopeful future for all of us. Today, our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The tax relief we passed is working. Think about this: Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. More minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. Our farmers are making a good living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America.

In the course of traveling your State, I met a lot of small-business owners who are making a good living because of our tax relief and because of their ingenuity and vision. And because they're making a good living, they're hiring people. We've added 1.9 million new jobs across this country in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in the great State of New Hampshire is 3.5 percent. Our economic policies are working.

In a new term, we'll keep your taxes low. We'll reduce the regulations. We'll do something about these lawsuits. We will put plans in place to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong so people can continue to work.

When I campaigned in 2000, I promised to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in our public schools. I kept my word. In a new term, we'll stay on the path of reform and results in all our schools so no child is left behind in America. In a new term, we'll make sure health care is more affordable and accessible for our families. In all we do to reform health care, we will make sure the health care decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC. In a new term, we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors and strengthen the system for our children and our grandchildren. In a new term, we'll protect marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society.

And all the progress we hope to make depends on the security of our Nation. We face enemies who hate our country and would do anything to harm us. I will fight these enemies with every asset of our national power. We will do our duty, and we will protect the American people.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. On September the 11th, 2001, our Nation suffered terrible harm, and the pain was greatest for our families of the lost. With us today are Ernie Strada and his wife, Mary Ann, who lost their son, Tom, at the World Trade Center. Please welcome the Stradas. The September 11th families will always be in our thoughts and always be in our prayers. This Nation must never forget their pain.

On the day of that tragedy, I made a decision: America will no longer respond to terrorist murder with half-measures and empty threats. We will no longer look away from gathering dangers and simply hope for the best. We are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to fight the terrorist enemy and defend America. We will not relent, and we will prevail.

First, we're on the offensive against the terrorist networks. The best way to prevent future attacks is to go after the enemy. We will confront the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We are

waging a global campaign from the mountains of Central Asia to the deserts of the Middle East, from the Horn of Africa to the Philippines. We're getting results. Since September the 11th, more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed, and the rest of them know we are on their trail.

Secondly, we are confronting regimes that harbor terrorists and feed the terrorists and support the terrorists. I set a doctrine that these regimes are equally as guilty as the terrorists. When a President speaks, he must speak clearly and he must mean what he says. I meant what I said, and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan doubted our commitment. The regime is no more, and America and the world are safer.

Third, we're confronting outlaw regimes that pursue weapons of mass destruction, have ties to terror, and defy the world. A lesson of September the 11th is we must never allow the terrorists to gain the world's most dangerous weapons. Saddam Hussein chose to defy the world. He doubted our resolve, and America and the world are safer because he is sitting in a prison cell. And that message was heard in Libya, which has now given up its weapons of mass destruction programs, and that has made America and the world safer.

Fourth, we're promoting freedom and democracy in the broader Middle East. If 20 years from now the Middle East is dominated by dictators and mullahs who build weapons of mass destruction and harbor terrorists, our children and our grandchildren will grow up in a nightmare world of danger. This does not have to happen. We have a duty to protect ourselves and to protect future generations of Americans.

By taking the side of reformers and democrats in the Middle East, we will gain allies in the war on terror. And we'll isolate the ideology of hatred, and we'll help defeat the despair and hopelessness that feeds terror. So we're helping to build free societies in Afghanistan and Iraq and across that troubled region. Freedom is on the march, and America and the world are more secure.

Our strategy to win the war on terror is succeeding. We are shrinking the area where terrorists can operate freely. We have the terrorists on the run. And so long as I am your President, we'll be determined and steadfast, and we will keep the terrorists on the run.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. To win the war on terror, to do our duty, America needs an unwavering commitment to see the task through. In any war, there are good days and there are bad days, but everyday, you need the same resolve.

When I took the oath of office 4 years ago, none of us could have envisioned what these years would bring. We've been through a lot together. My years as your President have confirmed some lessons and have taught me some new ones. One of the things I've learned about the Presidency is that whatever your strengths are, you're going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people are going to notice them. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. Sometimes, I mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from my dad. But all the times, you know where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this country.

A President must make America's priorities absolutely clear, especially in our uncertain world. I've learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even when the cause is right. I've been reminded that the world looks to America for leadership, and it is crucial for the American President to be consistent. I have learned a President must base decisions on principle, core convictions from which he will never waver. The issues vary. The challenges are different every day. The polls go up; the polls go down. But a President's convictions must be consistent and true.

And through these 4 years, I have learned anew the enduring character of this great Nation. I have met exceptional men and women during my time as your President. I have seen their strength and their sacrifice, and their examples have confirmed there is no limit to the greatness of America. I have seen the character in people like Cheryl McGuinness, Debra Burlingame, and Elizabeth Kovalcin, who are with us today.

Cheryl's husband, Tom, and Debra's brother, Charles, were both pilots who lost

their lives on September the 11th. Elizabeth's husband, David, was a passenger on Flight 11. These women have shown that hope can be found even in the worst tragedy. Cheryl says this: "While those terrorists may have killed almost 3,000 of our husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, children and friends on that day, they did not take away our spirit, our hope, or the promise of tomorrow." There is hope beyond the ashes of September the 11th, and nobody can take that away from us.

I've seen the character of America in people like Lisa Beamer and the husband she lost. Todd Beamer and other passengers on Flight 93 rushed those hijackers and led the first counterattack in the war on terror. Todd's final words captured the spirit of a nation. He said a prayer, and then he said, "Let's roll." Todd's dad, David Beamer, is with us today. I have been honored to have met Lisa as well. In terrible sadness, this family has been a model of grace, their own and the grace of God.

Just over a month after her husband's death, Lisa decided to take the same Newark-to-San Francisco flight that Todd had taken. And she explained, "I won't be held captive by fear." In the years to come, Lisa's words must be remembered by all Americans. As we fight the terrorists, they will try to frighten us. They will test our will by their barbaric tactics. We must be resolved. So long as I'm your President, we will not be held captive by fear.

The enemies who hit our country on September the 11th thought Americans would be fearful and weak. Instead, the world saw courageous rescuers, like New York City firefighters Michael Boyle and Tim and Tom Haskell, who ran toward danger. Michael's father, Jimmy, is with us today. Also with us is Ken Haskell, brother of Tim and Tom. America honors the courage of our first-responders. And we must always be grateful to those who carry out the great tradition of bravery and courage in the likes of Michael, Tim, and Tom.

After September the 11th, the world saw strangers comforting each other and a nation united in pride and defiance. For 3 years, the people of this country have shown patience and purpose in the hard tasks of history. We've risen to great challenges, and every American can be proud of their country.

I have seen the spirit of our country in those who wear our Nation's uniform, people like Mike McNaughton. Mike is a platoon sergeant from the Louisiana National Guard. He enlisted after September the 11th. He fought in Afghanistan and lost two fingers and a leg. I remember visiting Mike in the hospital. I said, "What do you like to do?" He said, "I like to run." I said, "Well, someday, you and I are going to run on the South Lawn of the White House." I don't know if he believed me at the time, but one day he showed up at the South Lawn of the White House, and we ran. I will never forget his determination and his courage and his sacrifice for our freedom.

I've spoken with so many of our people in uniform, from bases across America to a Thanksgiving in Baghdad. And I know their courage and their honor. They have fought our enemies with skill. They have treated the innocent with kindness, and they have delivered millions from oppression.

I have returned the salute of the wounded who told me they were only doing their duty. I've tried my best to comfort the families of the lost who told me to honor their loved ones by completing the mission. Like the men of Normandy and Iwo Jima before them, another great generation is serving America today, and our Nation is proud to stand with them.

All Americans must always remember the debt this Nation owes to the men and women who defend us. Those who wear the uniform are people of great character and service and duty and honor. We are thankful. And as we remember those who wear the uniform today, we must always remember the veterans who have set such a good example for today's men and women. And we are grateful to our military families for their sacrifice. And as long as I am the Commander in Chief, I assure you, we will keep our commitment we have made to our troops and their families. They will have the resources they need to complete their missions. As America saw on the $87 billion supplemental request, when I say something, I mean it.

We are not in this war alone. We must remember, our cause has been joined by many great nations and strong leaders. I've seen the determination of allies like Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain. The Prime Minister and I come from different political backgrounds and traditions, yet we share a clear understanding of the threat we face and our duty to defeat it. I remember a phone call I had with Prime Minister Blair on a Sunday morning early last year. I called him when he was facing a political crisis at home. I told him I wanted him as an ally, but if politics was such that he could not commit British troops to combat in Iraq, I would understand. The Prime Minister replied that he believed our cause was right, and because it was right, Britain would join us. He said, "I am with you, and I mean it." That day I heard the spirit of Winston Churchill in the Prime Minister of Britain.

More than 90 countries share this commitment in the war on terror, because they understand this is civilization's fight. All 26 NATO nations have personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan, or both. And 14 of the countries that have joined our coalition in Iraq have lost forces in our vital work. In the war on terror, America has led; many have joined; and America and the world are safer.

We must always remember the steadfast conviction of our good allies. Their contributions and their sacrifice must never be dismissed or denigrated. They have earned the gratitude of the American people. In a new term, in order to secure America, I will continue to work with our allies. We will strengthen our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

As the President, I've also seen the spirit of the people we have liberated. I will never forget the day when seven Iraqi men came into the Oval Office. Coming into the Oval Office can be sometimes a awe-inspiring experience. It's a magnificent shrine to democracy. They came in—they had all had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. They had had their hands cut off because his currency had been devalued and he needed a scapegoat. These men had been discovered in Iraq, had been flown to America to get a prosthesis, a new hand.

I told them, I said, "Welcome to the Oval Office. As we helped secure liberty in your country, we'll make sure—and you need to make sure—the institutions are bigger than the people who occupy the offices." That's certainly the case of the Oval Office. The institution of the President is always bigger than the person. I told them that by having the institutions bigger than the people, never again will somebody be able to pluck them out of society and arbitrarily cut off their right hands.

I will never forget the moment when one of those Iraqi men grabbed a Sharpie and in his new hand that he was just learning to use, slowly wrote out in Arabic a prayer for God to bless America. America should always be proud that our country remains the hope of the oppressed and the greatest force for good on this Earth.

Just last month, I welcomed Iraq's Prime Minister Allawi to the White House. For decades, he was a fearless critic of Saddam Hussein. As a matter of fact, in 1978, a team of assassins sent by the dictator attacked Dr. Allawi and his wife with axes and nearly killed him. He is a courageous man. Saddam Hussein knows the man he tried to murder is the leader of a free Iraq. Prime Minister Allawi is now confronting the enemies of freedom with strong determination. In the Rose Garden, he said that his nation would fight the terrorists in Iraq, room to room and house to house, so that the people of Iraq would never again have to live in tyranny.

Our mission in Iraq is clear. We are helping Iraq's new Government train armies and police forces and security forces so they can do the hard work of defending their freedom, so they can stand up and fight the terrorists who are trying to stop the advance of liberty. We'll help Iraq get on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

The will of the Iraqis is strong, and their dream for freedom is moving forward. The terrorists are brutal and cruel. Yet everyday, Iraq and coalition forces are defeating the enemy's strategic objectives. The enemy in Iraq wants to establish terrorist bases from which to operate. We are on the offensive. We are denying them sanctuary. The enemy

wants to intimidate Iraqis from joining the security forces, yet more 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and police and border guards are bravely serving their country. The enemy seeks to disrupt the march toward democracy, but Iraqis are preparing for free elections on schedule this coming January. The violent acts of a few will not divert Iraqis or our coalition from the mission we have accepted. Iraq will be free. Iraqis will be secure. And the terrorists will fail.

The Afghan people are also showing their character. The terrorists did everything they could to stop this month's elections, but the will of the Afghan people was more powerful than the hatred of the killers. Millions of Afghans lined up at the polls. The first vote in the Presidential election—the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Imagine what the Taliban would have said about that. [*Laughter*]

The new President, Hamid Karzai, is a brave, respected leader who traveled southern Afghanistan by horseback to rally forces against the Taliban. Three years ago, his country was the training camp of Al Qaida. Now it is a democracy, a friend of America, and an ally in the war on terror.

By acting in Afghanistan and Iraq, we removed threats. We're making our country safer. We are also living up to the highest calling of our history. We're the Nation that freed Europe and lifted up former enemies in Germany and Japan. And we gave hope to captive peoples behind the Iron Curtain. The liberation of more than 50 million people in our time is a noble achievement, and every American can be proud of that achievement.

We must always remember the principles of our founding and the hope that our country has brought to the world. As long as I'm your President, this Nation will stand for freedom and stand by our friends and never cut and run. I believe everybody wants to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These experiences have helped shape my view of the world and the kind of leader I am. And one of the most powerful and defining experiences took place on September the 14th, 2001. George Howard, an officer with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, was off-duty on September the 11th. But when he learned the news, he went right to the Twin Towers. He died trying to save others. On that day of September the 14th, I met his mom, Arlene, who is with us today. She gave me George's police shield. She asked me not to forget the fallen. I carry Shield Number 1012. I will never forget the fallen. God bless you, Arlene.

Time passes, but we must always remember the enemy that kills without shame or mercy. I will always remember the men in hardhats at Ground Zero shouting at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." My determination has not faded since that day. My determination is wrong—strong. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come so far. We've accomplished so much. Yet, our work is not finished. All of us are part of a great historic endeavor. We will lead our country through a time of danger. We will build a world of freedom and peace beyond the war of terror. I know we'll succeed. I know the character of the American people.

The polls open in Manchester at 6 a.m. on Tuesday. For a safer America, for a stronger America, and for a better America, I ask the people of New Hampshire to vote for me.

God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. at the Verizon Wireless Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Kathleen MacLellan Gregg, wife of Senator Judd Gregg; Gov. Craig Benson of New Hampshire; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Remarks in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

October 29, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. We are honored to be back. Such a beautiful

day here in the great State of New Hampshire. Thank you all for coming out to say hello.

We are here in your State today asking for your vote and asking for your help. I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to do their duty, and that is to vote. We have a duty in this society of ours, in our free land, to vote. And so will you please find fellow Republicans and wise independents—[*laughter*]—discerning Democrats and head them to the polls. And when you get them going that way, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Perhaps the most important reason to put me back in is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I don't want to offend anybody here who is follically challenged—[*laughter*]—but the Vice President doesn't have the prettiest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment, excellent experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

Two of our favorite people in Washington, DC, is Judd and Kathy Gregg. We're proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him Senator, and you should be. He's doing a great job for the people of New Hampshire. And we're fond of your junior Senator, John Sununu. What a good job he's doing. Congressman Jeb Bradley, your Congressman, is doing a great job in the House of Representatives. And Congressman Charlie Bass is with us. I appreciate you coming, Congressman. He's a good one.

And finally, I'm fond of your Governor. I know something about being a Governor. I was one—once one. He's doing a great job for the people of New Hampshire. You got to put Governor Benson back into office.

I want to thank Paul Needham for joining us. He's the former Democrat Derry town councilor. He was John Edwards for President State cochair. He's now a Democrat for Bush, and I'm proud he's here. And he's not alone. A lot of Democrats want a secure America. A lot of Democrats want a prosperous America. With your help, we're going to carry New Hampshire, and we're going to win a great victory in November.

I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. We made a lot of friends in our travels throughout New Hampshire. I see Barbara. I know Ruthie is here, people who have been friends of ours for a long time. I want to thank you for putting up the signs. I want to thank you for making the phone calls. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do over the course of the next 5 days, and that is gather up the vote and turn them out for a great victory.

The voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and different records. You know where I stand. And sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. [*Laughter*] We both have records. I'm proudly running on mine. The Senator is running from his. [*Laughter*]

This election comes down to clear choices for our families, issues of great consequence. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All our progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats unlike with any we have faced before. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they're determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness during these troubled times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence services. We're transforming our All-Volunteer Army. There will be no draft. We are relentless. We are determined. We're staying on the offensive. We're defeating the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Because we have led, Afghanistan is a free nation and an ally in the war on terror. Because we led, Pakistan is capturing terrorists, and Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests. Because we led, Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. Because we led, the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom, and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

And I'll protect America by leading the cause of freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe liberty can transform societies and help us keep the peace. I want you to remind your sons and daughters about the amazing history that has taken place in a relatively short period of time. Three-and-a-half years ago, young girls could not go to school in Afghanistan because of the brutality and dark vision of the Taliban. And if their mothers didn't toe their line of ideological hatred, they were whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. Because we acted to protect ourselves, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions voted in the Presidential election in Afghanistan. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq will have Presidential elections in January. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and America is better for it. Freedom is on the move around the world.

I believe everybody yearns to be free. That's what I believe. And it drives much of my foreign policy. Listen, I understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The President has to lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics change but not your principles. And Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe and where I stand and what I intend to do. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people, and I will always support our men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I want to thank those who wear our uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today. And I want to thank the veterans who are here who have set such a great example for the men and women of the military.

We have made a commitment to support our troops in combat. I'm the kind of fellow, when I say something, I mean it. I want the military families to know I mean what I said. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and requested $87 billion of important funding to support our troops in combat. We received great support from people of both political parties. As a matter of fact, only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against supporting our troops in harm's way. Only 12 voted against the $87 billion, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering up the vote, I want you to remind people of this startling statistic: Only four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against supporting our troops in combat—four Members, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign. When they asked my opponent about his vote, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] You know, I spent some time here in New Hampshire. I've been to the coffee shops. I've been to the community centers. I haven't heard anybody talk that way. [*Laughter*] They asked him several times about that vote, and he's given several different answers. Perhaps the most revealing of all was when he said about his vote against the $87 billion, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] My fellow Americans, there's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of

the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less safe. He voted against many of the weapons systems critical to our defense buildup to help us keep the peace. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait. If his view had prevailed, Saddam Hussein today would dominate the Middle East and would possess the most dangerous weapons. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in Americans' intelligence budget, so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right.

During the last 20 years, in moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt, the party of Harry Truman, the party of John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war and hours of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them. If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I am asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. There are big differences between us as to how to best protect our country. The security of our families is at stake during this election. Senator Kerry says that the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. He says that America must submit to what he calls a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. [*Laughter*] He was standing right about here when he said it during one of the debates. [*Laughter*] As far as I can tell, that means our country must get permission from foreign capitals before we act in our own defense. That's what the "global test" says to me.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Listen, I'll always work with our friends and allies. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We have a big difference of opinion. Recently the Senator was quoted as saying about 9/11 that it didn't change him much at all. It changed me. It changed my outlook. A few days after the attacks, I stood where the buildings fell. I will never forget that day. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the policeman or fireman—I don't know which one, where he worked, but he came out of the rubble, and he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I've gotten up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families, and I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to $1,000 per child. We reduced the marriage penalty. We think the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays income taxes. And after-tax income in America is up by about 10 percent since I have been your President. That means more money in your pocket.

When you're out gathering the vote, remind people about what we have been

through. The stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington. Then we had a recession. Then we had corporate scandals. And then we had the attacks of September the 11th that cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. We're on the path to growth. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in 20 years. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America. Our farmers are making a good living. The small-business sector of our economy is strong. The entrepreneurial spirit is flourishing across New Hampshire. Listen, we've added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in New Hampshire is 3.5 percent. We've overcome the obstacles. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

Now, my opponent has very different plans for your budget. He intends to take a big chunk out of it. He voted against the higher child tax credit, and he voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, the average family in America would be paying $2,000 more to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That may not sound like a lot to people in Washington. It's a lot to families right here in New Hampshire. It means a lot to you. It means a lot to a mom or a dad who are trying to raise their children. It means a lot to a small-business owner who's expanding his or her company. All told, during my opponent's 20-year career in the United States Senate, he voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is five times for every year he's been in the Senate. That's what I would call a predictable pattern—[*laughter*]—a leading indicator. [*Laughter*] When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [*Laughter*] He's also promised $2.2 trillion of new spending in this campaign. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him—they asked him, how are you going to pay for it? And he trotted out that same old, tired line we hear every campaign. He said, "Well, I'm just going to tax the rich."

Well, first of all, most small businesses in New Hampshire and around the country are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations, which means they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Most small businesses create most new jobs in America. Seventy percent of new jobs in this country are created by the small-business sector. And so when you're running up the top two tax brackets, you're taxing the job creators. And that makes no economic sense.

Secondly, raising the top two brackets raises about 600 billion or 800 billion, depending on who's doing the counting. In either case, that's far short of $2.2 trillion of spending. See, there's a gap—[*laughter*]—a gap between what has been promised and what can be delivered. I would call it a tax gap, and you know who usually gets to fill the gap. [*Laughter*] You do. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry New Hampshire and win on November the 2d.

The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. A good education and quality health care are important to a successful life. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. I worked with Senator Gregg and others, and we passed the No Child Left Behind Act, a fine piece of reform. We're increasing spending at the Federal level, but in return, we're asking for results. See, we believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, and we expect every school to teach. You cannot solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. We're diagnosing the problems all across our country, and the test scores are improving. Scores in reading and math are on the rise, and an achievement gap for minority students is closing. In a new term, we'll build on these reforms. We'll extend them to high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll continue to improve the lives of our families by making health care more accessible and affordable. We'll promote and extend community health centers to help the poor and the indigent get good primary and preventative care. We'll make sure our programs for children from low-income families will be fully subscribed to help people get the health care they need. In order to make sure health care is affordable, small business ought to be allowed to pool together across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get to buy insurance. We'll expand health savings accounts, which will help our small businesses and families with more affordable health care.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, not only in New Hampshire but across this country, we must do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. I have met too many ob-gyns that have been driven out of practice because of high premiums as a result of these lawsuits. I have met too many moms, expectant moms, who are concerned about the health care they and their baby will receive because their doctor no longer is in practice. This is a national problem that requires a national solution. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice. He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times in the United States Senate, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with New Hampshire's docs. I'm standing with New Hampshire's families. I'm standing with the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

My opponent has a different point of view when it comes to health care. I don't know if you remember the debate. They asked him about his health care plan. He stared straight in the camera, and he said his plan—"The Government has nothing to do with it." That's in reference to his health care plan. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people under his plan will go to a Government-run plan. If you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, small businesses will start dropping insurance because the Government is going to pay for it, and that moves people from private care to public care. When the Government starts writing a check, when it comes to your health care, then they start making the rules. And when the Government starts making the rules, when it comes to your health care, they start making decisions for you, and they start making decisions for your docs, and they start rationing care. Government-run health care is the wrong prescription for health care for America's families. In all we do to improve health care for our families, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice concerns your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs for our seniors. I kept my word. Medicare needed to be fixed. See, we would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. I didn't think that made sense for our seniors. It didn't make sense for the taxpayers. We brought people together, and I signed a Medicare law. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

And we'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Now, I remember the 2000 campaign, clearly remember it. They said in TV ads in those days and through mailers and word of mouth that, "If George W. got elected, the seniors wouldn't get their checks." When you're out rounding up the vote, please remind people that George W. did get elected and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me and Senator Gregg, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children, and we need to worry about our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether

or not Social Security will be there when they need it. And that is why I believe in personal savings accounts, that a worker ought to take some of their money and set aside a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

Now, my opponent takes a different approach. He talks about protecting Social Security. But he's the only candidate in this race who voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. On issue after issue, he tries to run, but we're not going to let him hide. When it comes to the next generation, he hasn't offered anything about fixing the system. See, the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring people together, and we will strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are crucial to keeping America's families strong. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for a culture of life, and I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortions.

My opponent has taken a different approach. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. At one time in his campaign, he actually said, "The heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found in communities all across New Hampshire.

I'm asking for your vote based upon my plans for the future, my record, and my philosophy. My opponent's views are out of the mainstream. I share your values. In a new term, I will stand for bedrock values of strengthening our economy every day. And I will do everything in my power to keep our country safe.

I'm sure Senator Kerry means well, but his policies are the wrong policies at this time of threat. He'll raise your taxes to pay for his promises, and that will stall our economy. He cannot lead our troops to victory in a war he does not agree with, a war he has called wrong. He cannot attract or keep allies in a cause he's labeled a diversion.

As your President, I'll rally the world. I will lead our troops. I commit our Nation to decisive victory in the war against terror. And my fellow citizens, against this threat to our founding values of freedom and tolerance and equality, victory is our only option.

One of my favorite quotes that I hope helps capture my feeling about our country and about our future came from a fellow Texan named Tom Lea. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." During the course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

I see a great day coming for America. And with your help and with your hard work, I'll be honored to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. at Pease International Tradeport Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Craig Benson of New Hampshire; Republican Party activist Barbara Russell; Ruth L. Griffin, councilor, District 3, Executive Council of New Hampshire; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 23

In the morning, in St. Pete Beach, FL, the President had an intelligence briefing. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Fort

Myers, FL. Later, they traveled to Lakeland, FL.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Melbourne, FL. Later, they traveled to Jacksonville, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Elwood Thalheimer.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

October 24

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Alamogordo, NM, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Nicole Cox.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, arriving in the evening.

October 25

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Greeley, CO. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Council Bluffs, IA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Donna Campbell. Later, they traveled to Davenport, IA.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to La Crosse, WI.

October 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Onalaska, WI. Later, they traveled to Richland Center, WI.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Cuba City, WI. Later, they traveled to Dubuque, IA.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

October 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then participated in an interview with Jim Gray of the ESPN television channel, for later broadcast.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Lititz, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Connie Rutt.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Vienna, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Bill Carney. Later, they traveled to Findlay, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Tom Joseph.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Pontiac, MI, arriving in the evening. Upon arrival at the Superdome, they met with African American leaders.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Rochester, MI.

October 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had telephone conversations with John W. Henry, principal owner, Larry Lucchino, president and chief executive officer, and Curt Schilling, pitcher, Boston Red Sox, to congratulate them on winning the Major League Baseball World Series.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Saginaw, MI. Later, he traveled to Dayton, OH. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Judy Keen of the USA Today newspaper. Upon arrival in Dayton, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Carol McClure.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Westlake, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Amy Poklar.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Yardley, PA, where, upon arrival in the evening, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Joe Morrison. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Manchester, NH.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Portsmouth, NH. Later, they traveled to Toledo, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Norm Thal. Later, they participated

in a Victory 2004 rally at the SeaGate Convention Centre.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Columbus, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Peggy Valentino. Later, they participated in a Victory 2004 rally at the Nationwide Arena.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released October 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1533, H.R. 2608, H.R. 2714, H.R. 2828, H.R. 3858, H.R. 4175, H.R. 4278, H.R. 4555, H.R. 5185, S. 524, S. 1368, S. 2864, S. 2883, and S. 2896

Released October 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1134 and S. 1721

Released October 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released October 29

Transcript of press gaggles by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on resolution of the dispute investigated by Presidential Emergency Board No. 238

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that on October 28 the President signed H.R. 4200

Acts Approved by the President

Approved October 22 *

H.R. 4520 / Public Law 108–357
American Jobs Creation Act of 2004

S. 2195 / Public Law 108–358
Anabolic Steroid Control Act of 2004

Approved October 25

H.R. 1533 / Public Law 108–359
To amend the securities laws to permit church pension plans to be invested in collective trusts

H.R. 2608 / Public Law 108–360
To reauthorize the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, and for other purposes

H.R. 2828 / Public Law 108–361
Water Supply, Reliability, and Environmental Improvement Act

H.R. 3858 / Public Law 108–362
Pancreatic Islet Cell Transplantation Act of 2004

H.R. 4175 / Public Law 108–363
Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004

H.R. 4278 / Public Law 108–364
Assistive Technology Act of 2004

H.R. 4555 / Public Law 108–365
Mammography Quality Standards Reauthorization Act of 2004

* These Public Laws were not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.

H.R. 5185 / Public Law 108–366
Higher Education Extension Act of 2004

S. 524 / Public Law 108–367
Fort Donelson National Battlefield Expansion Act of 2004

S. 1368 / Public Law 108–368
To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. (posthumously) and his widow Coretta Scott King in recognition of their contributions to the Nation on behalf of the civil rights movement

S. 2864 / Public Law 108–369
Family Farmer Bankruptcy Relief Act of 2004

S. 2883 / Public Law 108–370
Prevention of Child Abduction Partnership Act

S. 2896 / Public Law 108–371
To modify and extend certain privatization requirements of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962

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